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THE

CATHOLIC CHURCH FROM WITHIN

Nihil obstat.

✠ Joannes Cuthbertus, O.S.B.,
Episcopus Neoportensis.

Nihil obstat

✠ Æneas, *Episc. Aberdon.*

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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH FROM WITHIN

BY

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WITHDRAWN

WITH PREFACE BY

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LATE ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER

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PREFACE

A PICTURE of 'The Catholic Church from Within' sketched by a lay hand has advantages over one drawn by a priest. The subject has been viewed from a somewhat different standpoint. It is freer, perhaps more actual; does not pretend to be professional; is not authoritative. The picture may, therefore, in some sense, if not truer to nature, be yet more interesting, though it may fall short in professional turns and in a certain scientific touch and balance.

This is a book written by a member of the laity: by one who has lived for years—from childhood—among men and women of the world; who has mixed freely with Catholics, old and new, as well as with Protestants; who has travelled much, and has also lived much at home, occupied with books as well as with the discharge of many and diverse duties.

This little volume has a special interest of its own, a special value, for any who care to inquire what ordinary Catholics of the world, well educated in their religion and familiar with the ways of what is called Society, have to say on the inner life of Catholics. There is something that certainly differentiates the

intimacy of Catholic life from other forms of life that may be domestic, beautiful, tender and affectionate, but are not also Catholic. People hear of Catholic views, Catholic feelings and instincts—of ways and practices that are peculiarly and distinctively Catholic. They come across them now and then; they get glimpses and touches of them in Catholic homes. But generally they get no systematic presentation of them, unless they live on very intimate terms with Catholic friends; and even then the presentation of them is often but fragmentary and disconnected.

The author of this book sketches for the reader many and various phases of Catholic life, so that at last he may get a very fair and complete picture of the whole. The outsider, therefore, may feel pretty confident, when he has gone through the book, that he has penetrated into a Catholic home of the educated class—and this without the trouble of introductions, and subjection to the many inane formalities of society in a strange house.

But there is another class to whom this volume will prove acceptable, a class for which it seems to have been principally written—those who are converts to the Catholic Faith.

What a number there are who every day enter the fold of the Catholic Church and find themselves shy and self-conscious, as foreigners in a strange land! Were an ordinary Englishman to be suddenly transported from his quiet English home into the old embattled palace of

some Spanish grandee, he would feel scarcely less at home among the Spanish habits and traditions, etiquette, ways and hours, appointments, food and fashions, than does a convert from certain forms of Protestantism when he finds himself for the first time a professing member of the Catholic Church.

This is really not surprising. The reception of the grace of faith does not include the fruits of intellect and will-training, in the midst of the traditions and atmosphere of the Catholic Church. The firm conviction and belief that in the Catholic Church is to be found the Divine Teacher is in substance enough to warrant submission and reception into her fold. But reception into the Church no more makes you at once familiar with Catholic life than an introduction makes you intimate with strangers whom you have seen for the first time. Of course some converts know a great deal more than others: some have read, seen, and experienced much of Catholic life; while others have not.

In any case, I think this book cannot fail to be of service to the convert, whatever his antecedents.

People must bear in mind that the Catholic Church is not only a kingdom, spiritual yet visible, embracing in its mission all nations and races—an organic body to be found everywhere, with a complete legislative and executive system. It is more than this.

The Church is nothing unless she act as a spiritual power—unless she inform, govern, and control the mind and the heart of her children. 'Ah! here is the

subjection, here the slavery! It is what we always said: the Catholic Church fetters the intellect and enslaves the soul.' By all means, put it as you please. Our subjection of intellect, our slavery of soul are precisely what the Apostles gloried in, when they declared themselves 'bondsmen,' 'slaves of Jesus Christ.' 'Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.' Christ is the model; and the business of a Catholic is to form himself on this model. Graces, sacraments, doctrines, traditions, and practices have no other object, no other end, than to help him to perfect this work, which is the work of his life. The Catholic Church is the School of Christ. And though it contain many froward, thoughtless, worthless disciples, it also contains many who are faithful and fervent; and from the latter much may be learnt.

This book, then, in reality is all about the School of Christ. It gives many a story, many an experience, many an illustration of familiar difficulties, with a kindly word or a suggestion that is capable of bringing immediate ease and comfort. So much for its use to converts.

But to many an old Catholic the book should be of equal value. For the writer has gathered fruit not only from personal experience, but from the writings of many standard authors, which have been widely and intelligently read, with a practical purpose in view. As will be seen, even the latest instructions on 'liberal Catholicism,' 'mixed marriages,' and the unlawfulness

of educating Catholics at Protestant public schools have been brought under notice. Perhaps the most noteworthy chapter in the book is that on the Liturgy, which extends to a hundred pages. This will certainly be of general value and interest. It is surprising how little is known, even among old Catholics, of the beauty, variety, and meaning of the Liturgy, in its annual course. English Catholics have been so accustomed to content themselves with the great master-ideas and facts connected with the Divine Sacrifice, that they have too often allowed all the rest to pass unheeded. They have failed to draw out of the sacred Liturgy all the deep and stirring feelings it is capable of producing.

Finally, I augur for this little volume a kindly acceptance by all. One chapter follows another in simple, easy style, in no way stilted, studied, or affected, so that the reader feels that he is listening to a pleasant voice, narrating in the most natural and familiar way the experiences of a born Catholic, with regard to the various interests of Catholic life.

HERBERT CARDINAL VAUGHAN,
Archbishop of Westminster.

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE: *Sept.* 8, 1901.

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INTRODUCTION

It is now a number of years since I visited Spain; but among the many vivid impressions which the journey left on my mind, my first sight of the Cathedral of Seville is one of the most indelible.

It was late in the afternoon when my fellow-travellers and I first caught sight of the heavy massive towers and roof of the great cathedral, which appears, owing to its immense height, to stand alone, so completely does it dominate the smaller buildings in the square, which are scattered irregularly at its feet. The first impression given by its height, its noble proportions, and the dignity of its situation, cannot fail to strike the beholder with admiration, almost with awe. A more careful survey will possibly modify this opinion. Though there is much beauty in the design, it is still, alas! unfinished. The tower at the north transept which was to have been its crowning glory is still wanting, so that it has not the note of perfection so strikingly exemplified in some of its great rivals: St. Peter's, for instance, or the Cathedrals of Milan or Cologne. The short twilight of southern countries settled down upon us before we had half satisfied our feelings of admiration, and we returned to the hotel intent on the thought of all we had still to see, and resolving to go back at an early hour the next morning.

Accordingly we all started off the following day—a little band of four pilgrims—to visit the great cathedral.

Though we started with the same intentions we soon found ourselves separated. First by the jostling crowd—for our road to the cathedral led through the most crowded part of the town—then by the many attractions which lay along the route, to which, one after another, my friends succumbed.

Every moment the street seemed to get more crowded; the water-vendors, shouting their wearisome cry of 'Agua, Agua,' more noisy; and the beggars, who cluster in crowds round any stranger, more troublesome and importunate. I could stand it no longer, and leaving my companions to follow, in leisurely fashion, I hurried out of the noisy street into the great Plaza del Catedral. How glorious it appeared in the morning sunlight! The exquisite giralda, or belfry-tower, which stands a little apart from the cathedral, glowing in its splendid rainbow tints of deep lapis lazuli on the softest apricot-coloured ground. Never was there anything more beautiful than this giralda—an everlasting joy to the artist and the poet. But I had now no wish to linger outside; so, crossing the hot and dusty square, I made my way to the entrance. It was closed; but timely help was at hand. A kind priest, standing before the façade, saw the difficulty I was in, and, coming to my assistance, took me to a smaller side-entrance, and, with a few words of friendly advice about my further steps, lifted the heavy leather curtain, and ushered me into the church.

My first impression was that of peace. Outside I left the seething crowd, the friends who wished to detain me, the heat and bustle, the every-day life, and, having crossed the threshold, I found myself (or so it seemed to me) in a world apart.

For a moment even my admiration was hushed into silence. I could only say with my whole heart: 'Indeed this is the house of God, and the gate of heaven, and shall be called the court of the Most High!' No work of man can be really worthy of God, but here unworthiness is made to

look less unworthy; it is like a great act of faith which stone and mortar have raised and immortalized for ever. And this impression seemed to deepen, rather than diminish, as I advanced further into the church, and by degrees made myself better acquainted with all that there was to see and admire there. Wherever the eye soared it was delighted: nay more, the mind was soothed and rested.

The glorious columns, the stained-glass windows of exquisite colour and design; the side-chapels gleaming with treasures of marble and of art—Murillos, Riberas, elsewhere shut up in public galleries, but here kept to the use for which they were originally intended: that is to decorate God's sanctuary, and to raise up the minds of His children to the contemplation of the mysteries of religion.

So busily engaged was I, in my admiration and the thoughts that it excited, that I hardly noticed the lapse of time, when suddenly it occurred to me to wonder why at that hour of the morning there was no Mass going on, or even preparation being made either at the high altar or the side-chapels for its celebration. Numbers of people, it is true, were scattered about the cathedral, here and there, in groups before a favourite shrine. Priests were walking about, some going to attend the confessionals; others, in white cottas, were evidently on their way to baptize or exercise some other priestly function. All appeared to be occupied by their own affairs. I felt that I was a stranger among the busy crowd, and hesitated to take up anyone's time with my trivial questions and inquiries.

This went on for some time, and still my sense of isolation seemed to deepen. It was all beautiful, but so overpowering, so remote, I almost, for a moment, regretted having hurried on in front of my friends. Whilst I was hesitating in this way, wondering which way to turn, and what to do next, a door opened out of the sacristy and I saw two little boys in white surplices advance from it, one carry-

ing cruet-stands in his hand. At once I made up my mind to follow them. Evidently they knew more of the ways of this great cathedral than I did. Perhaps they might clear up the mystery.

I followed them down the side-aisle. They made for a big door which I had taken for another entrance into the building, but which I now found led into a wide passage. Again they pushed a heavy swing door; it opened, and we all found ourselves in a large church, filled with numerous side-chapels, in which Masses were going on at almost every altar.

Here, then, was the explanation of my difficulty. In other words, this was 'el sagrario,'[1] where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, and where weekday Masses (with the exception of one daily High Mass chanted by the canons of the cathedral) are always said for the congregation. Here I found all I had sought for—hitherto vainly—and, following the example of the rest, I also knelt in prayer.

The Catholic Church is very vast; it is also very complex, yet in a sense it is also very simple.

It is complex because it has been built up stone by stone by innumerable Saints, all moving under the same Divine inspiration: a great multitude (as we are told in the Apocalypse) which no man can count, of all nations, and tribes, and tongues, who, all working in unity, have built up the great spiritual city of God.

It is simple because it is animated by One Spirit—the Paraclete Whom the Son of God promised to His Apostles, Who should abide with them for ever.

There is also another sense in which it may be called simple: because, as the Church of God consists of a number of individual souls, for each of which Jesus Christ died, so the ultimate object of all religious observance is the union of

[1] Sometimes also called the 'parroquia,' or parish church.

the soul of man with God. It is through the instrumentality of the Church, by means of the Sacraments, and of the Sacrifice of the altar in which the death of Christ is daily renewed, and His merits applied to every living member of His Church, that this object is effected.

It is very important in the present day, when men of all creeds and all temperaments are attracted into the Church, that this great fact should be steadily kept in mind. As it was in the days when our Lord dwelt upon earth, so it is now. As He took one from the custom-house, another from his nets, a third He lifted up from the degradation in which she had been plunged by sin, a fourth He chose in his innocence and youth, so it is now with His Church. It is ever a call to a higher life. 'Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me.' 'Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.'

People are attracted into the Church by different reasons. One by the marvellous example of unity she exhibits: in a changing world she alone is ever the same. She appeals to another's æsthetic tastes. A third is attracted by the knowledge that she alone has the power to forgive sins. But for whatsoever reason a man seeks the shelter of her fold, the result must be the same if he is to find peace in it.

He must allow Divine grace to do its work in his soul, so that Jesus Christ may be formed anew in it, and, as St. Paul says, he may grow up 'to the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.'

We live in very hurried times. In the early days men gladly dedicated a life of toil and devotion to the erection of some stately cathedral, and now the same undertaking is expected to be accomplished in a couple of years: so it is with the building of the Catholic religion in the soul of man.

Life, with the great majority, is a race against time.

There must be no loitering over the matter, or they are off to something else! The priest is allowed a few hours for instructions (he has hardly time himself for more), and the thing is done.

Need we wonder that the result is such as we too often see it?

The author has attempted in the following pages to put together a few thoughts, gathered from the pages of spiritual writers and from the ancient liturgies of the Church, as suggestions to aid in the development of the supernatural life of the soul, both in the case of those newly received into the Church, and in that equally numerous one of the imperfectly instructed Catholic. In becoming a Catholic a great work has been begun in the soul, but what a fatal mistake does he make who thinks that it is accomplished in a day!

Our Lord compares the man who hesitates about obeying a Divine call to one who puts his hand to the plough and then draws back. What would He say, we venture to ask, to the convert of the present day who is satisfied to rest on his day's work after tracing out a single furrow?

It may be said that the design of the author is too ambitious; but to lift the curtain and point the way is the work of a child. To follow it is the work of a man, and can only be accomplished by the grace of God.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH FROM WITHIN

da martiro
E da esiglio venne a questa pace.
DANTE.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH FROM WITHOUT AND FROM WITHIN

I

IT is seldom that two people are led into the Catholic Church from the same cause, the motives probably differing as widely in every case as the character of the individuals who embrace that faith.

To some, conversion has come as a sudden light. As we read in the Lives of the Saints, a voice speaks to their souls, and in one moment all is made clear to them. But these cases are rare, though not so rare as might be supposed. Still they may be looked upon as entirely exceptional. As a rule it is not so much one thing as many, small in themselves possibly, but all working together, and all pointing in the same direction, by which souls have been led to the truth.

Perhaps some tradition which they have been brought up to believe in turns out to be a fraud, and having found they were mistaken on one point they have gone further. They have re-tested the grounds of their belief. They have examined them in the light of history, of the Scriptures. It has been weary

work. Often were they tempted to give up, to seek excuses which their conscience disallowed, to shelter themselves behind venerable names, to profess they had found peace where there was no peace. It was conviction in spite of themselves. But at last the light came, and is it too much to say that for the moment, for some, the pain of the discovery almost obscured its joy?

To one who has grown up within the shadow of a Church made venerable by its three centuries and more of existence, possessing glorious memories of the past in its cathedrals and public monuments—taken, it is true, from a religion which it supplanted, but giving birth to inspiring thoughts and recalling Christian ideals and fellowships with the saints—to such a one how terrible is the pang when he finds himself called by the voice of conscience to go forth, to leave all, and as the 'Following of Christ' puts it, 'naked to follow his naked Jesus!'

It is not only that truth, keener than a two-edged sword, cuts and divides him from his past, from beloved memories, from spots endeared to him by a thousand associations, from hallowed graves, but that he is called upon to renounce what he perhaps believed in most fondly and sincerely, sacraments in which he found comfort in times of trial and sorrow, grace in times of temptation. Then there was the solemn service of the Church of England, so beautiful in its simplicity, so reverent in its aspect, so suited to the wants and capacity of all.

Is it astonishing that he hesitates to leave all these—*certainties* he is almost tempted to call them—for an untried faith, an uncertainty, however beautiful and alluring? 'It is not without suffering,' says the great Pascal, 'that the soul becomes free;' and to many the suffering is too severe, the trial too great. They hesitate, they look back. The moment of grace, 'the acceptable time,' passes, and the Church hears of them no more.

Let us pause for a moment before we follow those who have entered the great portals of the Church, to consider the case of those who are still lingering on the threshold.

In these days in which we live, when the spirit of inquiry is in the very air we breathe, and light and knowledge are let in on every subject, and when the most rooted of conservatives must be prepared to see the groundwork of his belief (on religious subjects, like every other) tested as it never was before, it is safe to say that very few have not at one time or other received a twinge of conscience on the subject of the Catholic religion; a momentary panic lest after all the Antichrist of his youth should turn out to be no other than the Church of God.

With many this passing misgiving has gone no further, hardly, perhaps, leaving an impression behind—or if an impression was left, it was rather of avoidance, such as a man would have who has had a lucky escape, and need trouble himself no more on the subject, unless to congratulate himself on having escaped from delusions to which others had fallen victims. The Spirit of God breatheth where it listeth, and words which carry conviction to one mind are empty and meaningless to another. Again, how much remains to be done even after conviction has come! Conviction, as we are so often reminded, does not mean conversion; and in spite of a partial lifting of the veil, how much will oftentimes remain concealed of the face of that Church which has been so persistently and systematically vilified and calumniated by its enemies!

How few go to her to learn from her own mouth what are truly her doctrines, the crowd taking them ever instead from her professed foes! Again, how many fail to recognize the Church because she does not come to them habited in the garb in which they expected to find her! Like her Divine Master and Head, she comes to them as a stranger—as He did when He joined the disciples on their way to Emmaus; or as a

gardener, as He did when He showed Himself to the Magdalen, and 'their eyes are held so that they should not know Him.' This is probably the foremost reason why the Church gains few recruits from the ranks of certain schools of religious thought. They are accustomed to make up a picture to themselves of the Christians in primitive times, as portrayed in the pages of the New Testament, and because the Catholic Church with its splendid ceremonial, its hierarchy of Pope, Cardinals, and Bishops, does not correspond with the idea they have previously conceived of it, they will have none of it.

Of what use are the Scriptures to them? The disciples had them, too, as they 'held discourse together' on their way to Emmaus, but they could make nothing of them till Jesus Himself, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him.' O foolish and slow of heart, cries out the Church, the Son of God no longer walks upon the earth. But did He not promise His Church that He would send the Paraclete which would abide in it for ever? Did He not say, 'he that heareth you heareth Me?' Why do you look about you for what no longer exists, nor ever can again? Why do you expect to find Me as I was eighteen hundred years ago? Is a man grown up to full estate as a child in swaddling-bands? There is yet another reason, and this a more powerful and far-reaching one than any we have so far mentioned, why so few become Catholics and that is because the idea of faith as a gift of God, a supernatural virtue, has died out in the mind and heart of the English nation. The heresy and schism of over three hundred years have done their deadly work, and though we still use the word faith, to how few does it bear the meaning it bore in the minds of our Catholic forefathers! With regard to this ill-sounding word heresy—which one body of Christians is ever ready to cast at another—we wish it to be understood that we use it not in the sense of a term

of reproach, but as the only accurate definition of a party which, while refusing the name, has ever claimed the freedom of opinion which is signified by that word and no other.

'Heresy,'[1] says a Scripture lexicographer, Professor Schleusner—whose name all Protestants agree to be one of great authority—'is a word which has no invidious meaning in itself, and signifies choice, or option between two alternatives. The word in its next sense means sect, or body of persons who choose for themselves, embrace, and follow the doctrine of some teacher, or some particular mode of life in preference to others, either in a good or bad sense.'

If the etymology of this word proves it to be of so harmless a nature, why is it, we may well ask, that all men have ever since the introduction of Christianity looked upon it as a word of reproach? Principally, no doubt, on account of the hard words levelled at it by the inspired writers: 'A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition avoid, knowing that he that is such a one is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgment.' Also because this temper of mind, innocent though it be of itself, or as applied to secular affairs, means the death of that faith 'without which it is impossible to please God.' Tertullian says that a heretic is condemned by the very fact of his choosing for himself, since a Christian has no such liberty of choice, but is bound to receive the doctrine which the Apostles received from Christ.

'Now, in the first place' (asks Newman), 'what is Faith? It is assenting to a doctrine as true, which we do not see, which we cannot prove, because God says it is true, who cannot lie. And further than this, since God says it is true, not with His own voice, but by the voice of His messengers, it is assenting to what man says, not simply viewed as a man, but to what he is commissioned to declare, as a messenger, prophet, or ambassador from God. . . . This is what Faith

[1] αἵρεσις.

was in the time of the Apostles, as no one can deny, and what it was then it must be now; else it ceases to be the same principle. I say it certainly was this in the Apostles' time, for you know they preached to the world that Christ was the Son of God, that He was born of a Virgin, that He had ascended on high, that He would come again to judge all, the living and the dead. Could the world see all this? Could it prove it? How, then, were men to receive it? Why did so many embrace it? On the word of the Apostles, who were, as their powers showed, messengers from God. They were to submit their reason to a living authority. Moreover, whatever an Apostle said, his converts were bound to believe; when they entered the Church they entered it in order to learn. The Church was their teacher; they did not come to argue, to examine, to pick and choose, but to accept whatever was put before them. No one doubts, no one can doubt this, of those primitive times. . . . This is clear from the words of Scripture: "We give thanks to God," says St. Paul, "without ceasing, because when ye had received from us the word of hearing, which is of God, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it truly is) the word of God." Men might indeed use their reason in inquiring into the pretensions of the Apostles; they might inquire whether or not they did miracles; they might inquire whether they were predicted in the Old Testament as coming from God; but when they had ascertained this fairly, in whatever way, they were to take all the Apostles said for granted without proof; they were to exercise their faith, they were to be saved by hearing.

'Such is the only rational consistent account of Faith; but so far are Protestants from professing it, that they laugh at the very notion of it. They laugh at the very notion of men pinning their faith (as they express themselves) upon Pope or Council; they think it simply superstitious and narrow-minded to profess to believe just what the Church believes, and to assent to whatever she shall say in times to

come on matters of doctrine. That is, they laugh at the bare notion of doing what Christians undeniably did in the time of the Apostles. Observe, they do not ask whether the Catholic Church has a claim to teach, has authority, has the gifts; no, they think that the very state of mind which such a claim involves in those who admit it, the disposition to accept without reserve or question, is slavish. They call it priestcraft to insist on this surrender of the reason, and bigotry to offer it. That is, they quarrel with the very state of mind which all Christians had in the age of the Apostles; nor is there any doubt (who will deny it?) that those who thus boast of not being led blindfold, of judging for themselves, of believing just as much and just as little as they please, of hating dictation, and so forth, would have found it an extreme difficulty to hang on the lips of Apostles had they lived at their date, or rather would have simply resisted the sacrifice of their liberty of thought, would have thought life eternal too dearly purchased at such a price, and would have died in their unbelief.'[1]

We all know the history of the great revolt of the sixteenth century. We may differ in the moral or conclusions we draw from it, but as to the facts there can be no difference of opinion.

Till then one Church had reigned undisputed (or well-nigh undisputed) in the Christian world. It alone claimed, and could prove its claim, to be the Church founded by the Apostles; but according to its opponents it had fallen away from its first faith, errors and abuses of all kinds had crept in; finally, according to the English Reformers, it had been 'at once drowned in abominable idolatry, of all other vices most detested of God and most damnable to man, and that by the space of eight hundred years and more.'[2] One thing they could not urge—nor have ever urged—and that is that this

[1] *Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations*, pp. 206–7.
[2] *Homily Against Peril of Idolatry*, part iii.

Church, so sunk in sin and abomination, was any other than the Church founded on the rock, the Church to whom Christ promised that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, and that He Himself would be with it all days, even to the consummation of the world. It has been well said: 'The most convincing proof of the apostolicity of the Catholic Church is that she has never separated herself from any Christian body more ancient than herself . . . The Greeks and the Protestants may say, if they will, that they did right in separating. That is not the question. Are they, or are they not, separated from Catholicism? As St. Cyprian answered the heretics of his time, "It was not we who separated from them, it was they who went out from us."'[1]

Protestantism, having therefore declared war against authority in the person of the successor of Peter, proceeded to set up one of its own in opposition to it. This principle of authority Luther found in the Sacred Scriptures, his example being followed by the Anglican Church. Henceforth, according to the dictum of Chillingworth, the Bible, and the Bible only, was to be the religion of Protestants. Strange and most illogical of doctrines! For this holy Book, which the Catholic and Apostolic Church has given to the world, whose genuineness all Christians take on her word, carries among its fruitful messages to the heart of man absolutely no trace of this mission which the *soi-disant* Reformers thrust upon it. Nowhere in its pages do we read that the world was to be converted by reading; on the contrary, the mission Christ gave to His Apostles and their successors was to preach the Gospel, and thus to plant the Church. 'Foolish is he,' exclaims Plato in 'Phædo,' 'who thinks to hand on an art to posterity simply in a book. Foolish also is he who searches for it therein, as though written characters could transmit to his mind any clear and

[1] *De Unitate Ecclesiæ.* Abbé Picard's *Christianity or Agnosticism?* p. 462.

solid instruction. If despised or unjustly attacked, a book will ever require its author's help, for it can never defend or assist itself.' [1]

Before discussing this oft-debated question, let us take up this Book, which all Christians agree in venerating, and read those words with which our Divine Saviour took leave of His disciples before His Passion and death.

'Jesus answered and said to him: If any one love me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and will make our abode with him. . . . These things Jesus spoke, and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said: Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee. . . . And now I am not in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we also are. . . . Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth. And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one, as we also are one. I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one, and the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast also loved me. . . . Just Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have made known thy name to them, and will make it known: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.' (John xiv. 23, xvii. 1–26.)

Unity of faith in the certain possession of truth is therefore the distinctive mark of the true disciples and followers of our Lord, and the prerogative of the Church founded by

[1] Plato, edit. Stallbaum, t. viii, p. 65; *ibid.* p. 522.

Him; if we look for it elsewhere is it too much to say that we find no trace of it?

'It is a manifest and certain truth that Holy Scripture without an infallible living authority to explain and interpret it is a source of universal and permanent division. Before it can become a bond of unity, one of two things is necessary: namely, that God should preserve from error every individual who studies it, or else that He should forearm against all error the Church which teaches it.'[1] We have only to study the history of the Reformation to see the truth of this allegation. Upon no two doctrines were the leaders of the party agreed. 'Luther admits the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist by consubstantiation; Calvin denies this. Luther acknowledges that the just can fall from a state of grace; Calvin affirms that grace once received can never be lost. Luther teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation; Calvin asserts that the children of believers are born in a state of sanctity and need no baptism. Anglicanism retains the episcopate as a divine institution; Luther and Calvin both reject it. Anathemas are exchanged between these so-called Reformers. According to Zwinglius, Luther is a "Seducer worse than Marcian." In the eyes of Luther, Zwinglius is an antichrist. Henry VIII. curses Luther; Luther hurls against Henry epithets which no decent lips can repeat. "The dogmas of Luther," said one of the most celebrated of the Calvinist ministers of the eighteenth century, "are impious; they tend towards Manicheism, and are destructive of true religion." Is it surprising that Melanchthon, Luther's first disciple, should cry out in despair: "No! the Elbe with all its waves can never furnish us with water enough for tears to shed over our divided reform." And Luther himself towards the end of his life made this avowal: "I must own that my doctrine has caused much scandal. Yes! I cannot deny it. Sometimes these

[1] *Christianity or Agnosticism?* p. 522.

things frighten me, especially when my conscience tells me that I have torn to pieces the former state of things in the Church, living so tranquilly and peacefully as she did under the Papacy." '[1]

If the great learning and powerful personal influence of the early Reformers were not sufficient to keep their followers from straying out of the appointed paths in their own lifetime, the subsequent history of the Reformation need cause us no astonishment. Divided from the first, its progress has ever been the same. A fruitful mother of sects and dissensions, it has spread over the inhabited globe, ever testifying (in spite of itself) that outside the Catholic Church there can be no unity of faith. In Germany, the cradle of the Reformation, faith in the divine inspiration of the Bible has been so systematically undermined by the spread of infidel doctrine, and what is called the higher criticism, that to profess belief in this—the very fundamental doctrine of the Reformers—is sufficient to provoke the ridicule of the educated.

'Protestantism,' says that learned and enlightened Protestant, F. de Pressensé,[2] 'rested on two principles—the divine inspiration of the Bible, and justification by faith in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Each word of the holy Book was the Word of God, and the Saviour was in all truth the

[1] *Ibid.* p. 526.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 542. These remarks, made at a conference given at Lausanne, February 11, 1894, though perfectly applicable to the rapid disintegration of religious thought on the Continent, would no doubt be considered exaggerated if addressed to an English audience. But they will not cause surprise when we remember that at the Synod held at the Temple of the Rue St. Honoré, Paris, in 1873, M. Guizot was obliged to withdraw, because he demanded that the Divinity of Jesus should be laid down in formal terms in the synodal profession of faith, and that the Synod separated without having been able to formulate a common belief, or to agree on one single point, not even on the Divinity of Christ or Scriptural inspiration.

eternal Son of God made man. But at this day what has Protestantism done with these two fundamental truths? Who now admits the divine inspiration of the sacred Book? Christ is no more than a purely human being. His Divinity, if the expression be even used at all, means no more than His Sanctity and moral perfection. All that remains to guide Protestants is the individual conscience, whence comes that state of decay which is ever manifesting itself more and more.' If we consider these words, spoken of his own Communion by one wholly above prejudice, and himself a firm believer in the great truths of Christianity, and look round the civilised world devastated by infidelity and rationalism, the offspring of the private interpretation of Scripture, we may well shudder, and recognise the fulfilment of our Saviour's prophecy, 'When the Son of man cometh, think you He shall find faith on earth?'

'We are born in Belief, and we are obliged to live and die in it.'[1] And if it should be our happy fate to witness a religious revival in this country, it will be by a return to the piety and faith of our Catholic forefathers, to their loyalty to the See of Peter, which, as it alone can claim to be the Church of the Apostles, only, has a right to the submission and obedience claimed by them. Reason will conduct him to the entrance of this Gate Beautiful, but faith—divine faith, the gift of God, which infinitely transcends all of which the intellect of man left to himself is capable—alone can take him within.

Certitude in matters of faith is what the soul of man ever hankers after, but 'a philosophical and religious certitude is essentially a moral certitude. Now a moral being cannot be convinced without liberty. Our acts are free only inasmuch as our faith is free. A sensible evidence of God's existence would suppress the possibility of moral good. We should then be slaves: who is there that, being as certain of

[1] Jacobi.

seeing God as he is certain of seeing himself, would dare to offend Him and risk being damned? It is absurd to exact indisputable evidence in order to believe . . . or such proof as would render doubt impossible—as Scherer desires—in a word, belief independent of the will.'[1]

'It is just you should ask of Me, He says to us like Gideon, if it is indeed *I* who speak; but when the doubt is once settled you have no cause to be disquieted, though what I tell you may not be conformable to your limited understanding. "O man," exclaims Bossuet, "accept the remedy as it is presented to you; believe while you await the act of vision. To believe constitutes your merit, to see is your reward."'[2]

II

God has never left Himself without a witness in this world of His creation. This is attested by the inspired writers and laid down almost as an axiom by the Fathers. Patriarchs and prophets and kings each in turn delivered their message to man, until at last the Messiah, the Desired of Nations, was made flesh, and entered on His career of Redemption. St. John sums up in a few words the reception He met upon earth: 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.' The high-priest and the leaders of the synagogues plotted to take away His life, but our Divine Saviour, drawing a distinction between their evil lives and the authority which they represented, said of them, 'The Scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you observe and do, but according to their works do ye not.' And again, speaking of Caiaphas's prophecy, 'that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not,' the Scripture adds: 'And this he spoke

[1] *Christianity or Agnosticism?* p. 115. [2] *Ibid.* p. 572.

not of himself, but being the high-priest of that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation.' (John xi. 51.) But though the inerrancy of the Church had been foreshadowed in the Old Law, it was but a type of the light which was to be the glorious heritage of the Church founded by Jesus Christ, of which St. Peter speaks when, addressing the Christians of Asia (the converts of his day), he exhorts them to declare His virtues, 'who hath drawn you out of darkness into His marvellous light.'

Again, the Scriptures allude to it as a house set on a hill, and the promise is given 'that a path and a way shall be there, and it shall be called the holy way, the unclean shall not pass over it, and this shall be to you a straight way, so that fools shall not err therein.' (Is. xxxv. 8.)

With these words before us, therefore, let us examine the means used by our Lord for their fulfilment, especially with regard to the fools, namely the ignorant, and the poor, who, as He had announced to His Precursor, were to have the Gospel preached to them.

We read that in the beginning of His public ministry Jesus collected, one by one, twelve men about Him, and that of these men one, from the first, was looked upon by the others, and by our Saviour Himself, as the leader and spokesman for the rest; that it was from his boat that our Lord, in His frequent passages to and fro on the Lake of Gennesareth, preached to the crowd who followed Him; and finally, when our Lord, after preparing their minds for His Divine mission, asked them who He was, that it was he who answered. There were among these twelve men several near relations of Jesus, whom the Scriptures mention as His brethren, and we may safely assume that, besides having been lifelong witnesses of His holy life, they had heard of, if they had not been present at, His first miracle at Cana in Galilee. But to none of these belongs the honour of first confessing the Divinity of Jesus Christ. It was to Simon, in return for his

confession of faith, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,' that our Saviour spoke those words: 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.' (Matt. xvi. 17–19.)

As Abraham, when in reward for his fidelity he was given the promise of becoming the father of many generations, had his name changed by the Most High from Abram to Abraham, in the same manner Simon, rechristened Peter, was made the foundation of the Christian Church, so that to all succeeding generations the See of Peter and the Church of Christ were to be synonymous terms.

Later on, after our Lord had eaten the Pasch with His disciples, on the eve of His Passion and death, He again made allusion to the position St. Peter was to occupy with regard to His Church. To all the twelve who had 'continued with Him in His temptations' He gave a heavenly kingdom and the promise that 'they may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel,' but to Peter 'the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren.' (Luke xxii. 31, 32.)

Once more our Divine Saviour spoke to Peter, and this time after His Resurrection, on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias. He asks him twice: 'Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?' and on his answering, 'Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee,' twice He tells him, 'Feed my lambs.' Then a third time He says: 'Simon, son of John, lovest thou

me?' and this time He said to him, 'Feed my sheep.' (John xxi. 15–17.)

The Fathers and Doctors of the Church draw the deduction from these words, that while St. Peter shared in all the promises made to the other Apostles, the threefold promise of our Divine Saviour, in right of which his primacy was for ever established in the Church, was made to him alone. And thus St. Irenæus says: 'It is therefore to the See of Rome that the Church as a whole, that is to say the faithful in every place, adhere because of its superior sovereignty.'[1] And St. Ambrose writes: 'One of the Twelve was chosen that by the establishment of a head all occasion of schism might be taken away.' Again: 'I am in communion with the See of Rome because I wish to follow Jesus Christ.'[2]

We hold, on the authority of the great Aquinas, 'that it is incumbent on Divine Providence to provide each soul with all necessary conditions for salvation unless some hindrance is offered on the soul's part. For were one so brought up, to follow the lead of natural reason in the pursuit of good and the avoidance of evil, it is to be held for a perfect certainty (*certissimum tenendum est*) that God would either reveal all necessary belief to him by an internal inspiration, or He would send some one to preach the faith to him as He sent Peter to Cornelius.' Or, as we may venture to add, as He vouchsafed Himself to speak to Paul, the fiery persecutor of His infant Church.

How wonderful is the history of this first great convert —a mysterious type of many who by the grace of God have been forced, almost in spite of themselves, to embrace a religion which they had been brought up to hate and despise!

We read in the Acts of the Apostles that St. Paul started on his journey to Damascus 'as yet breathing out threaten-

[1] *Christianity or Agnosticism?* p. 472: St. Iren. *Adv. Hær.* bk. iii. ch. iii. [2] *Ibid.* p. 472.

ings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord . . . and suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him, and, falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Who said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And he, trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'

Paul is blinded in order that he may see. No sooner are the eyes of his body darkened by the power of the Most High than a flood of light bursts upon his soul. Obedient to the divine command he goes on to Damascus, and in that city God reveals to the disciple Ananias the great design He has upon him: 'Go thy way,' He says to him, 'for this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.' (Acts ix. 15.)

This is to be, then, the glorious vocation of St. Paul. He is to preach in words of fire to the Pagan and Gentile world, rousing it from its sleep of death and bringing to its very doors the message of the Gospel of Christ. Moreover, he is to write, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, glowing words which will ever live in the minds and hearts of men; and it will be his special glory to elucidate and expound—more than had been done by any other of the great Apostles and Evangelists—the doctrine of the intimate connection between the Church of Christ and her Divine Spouse.

In these two names constantly linked together—for the Church in all her official decrees issues her mandates under the Fisherman's seal and in the names of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul—we see God's guarantee to man of the perpetual infallibility and unity of His Church. He founds it on the rock, Peter; He makes it mighty promises, not for one time, but for all time, and till time shall be no more—till the consummation of the world. And His words, as He tells

us, are 'spirit and truth.' They are also (as the Fathers tell us) creative words, creating what they assert; and again it is said of this Divine Word that 'it shall not return to me void, but it shall do whatsoever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it.' (Is. lv. 2.) To this great name the Church, divinely inspired, has associated another, the convert Paul, whose special mission it was to carry the name of Christ to the Gentiles, and whose spiritual children therefore we are. It is to this great Apostle that we owe a most precise and categorical account of the workings of the Spirit 'in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth;' and this not only with regard to the evolving (as the Church grew and developed) of all the various Orders and ministries within her bosom, which he calls 'diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all,' but in particular to the specific teaching about the Church, which more than any other description which we possess in the inspired writings enables us to understand her exact position in 'the mind of Christ.'

To St. Paul the Church is ever the Body of Christ: 'the Church, which is His Body and the fulness of Him who is filled all in all;' 'the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.' It is again one body of whom Christ is the Head, from whom the 'whole body maketh increase unto the edifying of itself in charity.'[1] In another epistle, to the Corinthians, he says: 'For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, yet are one body, *so also is Christ.*' (1 Cor. xii. 12.)

The Catholic Church is therefore distinguished from any other Communion calling itself Christian by the fact that it was established by Christ Himself on the Rock Peter, that it is united to Him, as St. Paul teaches, as the head is united to the members; and that the Divine Spirit, which

[1] Eph. i. 22, 23; iv. 13, 16.

Christ promised to it, testifies His presence in it by preserving it in the unity of Faith and the knowledge of Truth.

This visibility of the Church is one of the necessary consequences of the great scheme of Christ's Redemption of man; and, as Moehler says, 'the ultimate reason of it is to be found in the Incarnation of the Divine Word.'

'Had that Word descended into the hearts of men without taking the form of a servant, and accordingly without appearing in a corporeal shape, then only an internal invisible Church would have been established. But since the Word became *flesh* it expressed itself in an outward, perceptible, and human manner; it spoke as man to man, and suffered, and worked after the fashion of men, in order to win them to the Kingdom of God; so that the means selected for the attainment of their object fully corresponded to the general method of instruction and education determined by the nature and the wants of men. This decided the nature of those means whereby the Son of God, even after He had withdrawn Himself from the eyes of the world, wished still to work in the world and for the world. The Deity having manifested its action in Christ according to an ordinary human fashion, the form also in which His work was to be continued was thereby traced out. The preaching of His doctrine needed now a *visible, human* medium, and must be entrusted to visible envoys, teaching, and instructing after the wonted method; men must speak to men and hold intercourse with them, in order to convey to them the Word of God. And as in the world nothing can attain to greatness but in society, so Christ established a community; and His divine Word, His living will, and the love emanating from Him exerted an internal binding power upon His followers, so that an inclination implanted by Him in the hearts of believers corresponded to His outward institution. Thus the visible Church from the point of view here taken is the Son of God Himself, everlastingly manifesting Himself among men in a human form, always renewed, and ever young, the permanent incarnation of the same, as in Holy Writ even the faithful are called the body of Christ. Hence it is evident that the Church, though composed of men, is yet not purely human. Nay, as in Christ the divinity and the humanity are to be clearly distinguished, though both are bound in unity; so is He in undivided entireness

perpetuated in the Church. If the divine, the living Christ and His Spirit constitute undoubtedly that which is infallible and eternally inerrable in the Church, so also the human is infallible and inerrable in the same way, because the divine without the human has no existence for us; yet is it not inerrable in itself, but only as the organ and manifestation of the divine.'[1]

Here we have the whole doctrine and explanation of the workings of the Son of God in the Church founded by Him. It partakes of the nature of God in its divine side, Who dwells in it, and is One with it, and Who preserves it from error. On the other hand, we need see no inconsistency in its members (deeply though we may deplore it) falling into sin, and disgracing the glorious destiny to which their birth in, or conversion to, the Catholic Church entitled them. Judas, chosen by Christ Himself and elected to a place among the twelve Apostles, fell, and it was said of him, it had been better for him if he had never been born; and yet dare anyone urge against the Sacred College of Apostles that they were unworthy because one out of their number was a sinner?

If we must be prepared, therefore, both by the nature of the case and by the warnings of our Lord—'scandals there must be'—and His parables in which He compares the Church to the field of grain in which the tares grow up with the wheat till the harvest is gathered, or the marriage-feast where among the invited one is found not clothed with a wedding garment, yet it is obvious that we should confidently look for some conspicuous marks or signs of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Church founded by Christ, and so closely united to Him.

These marks have been summarised by the Constantinopolitan Creed as being four: that she is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic—marks which could never be pleaded by any other sect claiming to be Christian. Of the last two characteristics little need be said, the Church which is

[1] Moehler, *Symbolism*, p 253.

universally known as Catholic being alone spread over every nation of the earth and ruling irrespective of tongue, or government, or nationality—as it alone can show an unbroken descent from Peter, the rock on which Christ founded His Church, and to whose government He entrusted it. If we wish to understand the true and evangelical view of the unity of Christ's Church we have but to turn to the writings of the first Christians—a source to which every Communion appeals, but by whose decision only one Body of Christians is satisfied to abide, and that the one which alone is identical with it. St. Ignatius, the disciple of St. John, proclaims the Church's unity, and the necessity of union with and submission to her. 'Do nothing,' he writes, 'without the Bishop . . . Jesus Christ is one . . . Therefore let all of you meet together as in one temple, as at one altar, as in one Jesus Christ. We are to receive one Eucharist, for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, one altar, one chalice, as there is one Bishop.'[1] Our Lord breathes 'incorruption into His Church.'[2] In his epistles the term 'Catholic Church' appears for the first time in Christian literature,[3] and it embodies the same idea which he expresses elsewhere when he tells the Ephesians to be united in the mind of God, and goes on to say that the bishops established throughout the world (*κατὰ τὰ πέρατα*) 'are in the mind of Jesus Christ.'[4] In this Church he recognised a visible head, the Church which presides (*προκάθηται*) in the region of the Romans.

St. Irenæus,[5] writing, not later than 190, a treatise against

[1] *Ad Philad.* 4; *Cath. Dict.* p. 189. [2] *Ad Eph.* 17; *ibid.*
[3] *Ad Smyrn.*; *ibid.* [4] *Ad Eph.* 17; *ibid.*

[5] *Rom. ad init.*; *ibid.* 'The Testimony of Irenæus,' says Schlegel in his history of the Church in Germany, 'is the crux of Protestants. In fact, how could St. Irenæus, brought up in the East, have admitted without difficulty and set forth with such precision this primacy of Rome if he had not known and acknowledged it from his infancy, and if St. Polycarp, the disciple of John, had not himself taught it to him? —*Christianity or Agnosticism?* p. 472.

heresies, says: 'We must not seek from others the truths which it is easy to obtain from the Church, since into her, as into a rich treasury, the Apostles poured, as into a full stream, all which pertains to the truth; so that all who will may drink at her hands the water of life. She is the gate of life; as for all the rest, they are thieves and robbers.' So that this unity, so jealously guarded by the early writers and Fathers of the Church, is ever centred in the Petrine See of Rome. Thus Tertullian calls the Pope the Bishop of bishops, and St. Cyprian speaks of Rome as the mistress of all Churches, whence follows the unity of the priesthood. To make the Church's unity visible, he says, the Lord Himself willed that this unity should be centred in one man as in its source.

St. Ambrose teaches that 'from Rome flows to all other Churches the right of legitimate Communion,' and that 'Communion with her is the proof that we are in Catholic Unity.' 'For,' as St. Augustine says, 'in Rome has always resided the principality of the Apostolic See.' The subject of the unity of the Church is so vast that it would be impossible in the course of a rapid sketch such as the present one to do it adequate justice. Readers interested in this subject will find in the works of Döllinger (in his 'First Age of the Church'), Rivington, Moehler, and Allies all the information they require.

We have now to consider the claim of the Catholic Church to the mark of holiness, and, in order to establish it on a sure and solid basis, we cannot do better than quote the words of St. Augustine with regard to the closeness of the union between her and her Divine Spouse. From the aspect she bears in the inspired vision of the saints we will pass on to that which she offers to the world; for if the Church is truly one with Christ the signs of this blessed union must be visible to all mankind.

As the Church was to St. Paul, so it is ever to the great

Augustine, the mighty penitent and saintly Doctor. It is Christ Himself, working through His members, whose presence—obscured at times by human frailty—is never disjoined, always present, 'totus Christus,' as he calls it continually. At times, in his writings, he seems wholly transported out of himself by the prospect that lies before him, and calls on his fellow-Christians to rejoice and praise God because not only are they made Christians but they are made Christ. 'Brethren,' he says, 'understand ye the grace of God our Head? Be filled with admiration, rejoice: we are made Christs. For if He is the Head and we are the members, He and we make up the whole man.' [1]

This claim on the part of St. Augustine for the Catholic Church, to which he was an illustrious convert, is one of such importance that before going further it would be as well to examine into the history and inner meaning of our Divine Lord's life upon earth, so as to establish a parallel between it and that Communion which professes to be one with Him.

A great deal might be said about the many-sidedness of our Lord's character as manifested to us in the Gospels; and, as a matter of fact, we all know that people find in those sacred pages in a very large measure what they go there to seek in them. The rigorist sees Christ as One who sits in judgment on the duplicity of the Scribe and the Pharisee, condemning them in words of burning indignation, or again turning the money-changers out of the temple, and crying out that the zeal of the House of God had eaten Him up.

The lax and indifferent console themselves by dwelling on the picture of Christ assisting at the marriage feast of Cana, turning the water into wine in order to save the confusion of the master of the feast who had insufficiently provided for the guests; or they see Him as refusing to condemn

[1] St. Aug. *In Joan.* cap. 5, Tr. 21.

the woman taken in adultery, and sending her away comforted with that gentlest rebuke and sentence, that she was to 'sin no more.'

But apart from these particular instances, or similar ones, which appeal to special individuals, we must all admit there are other commanding traits in that Divine Personality the significance of which no one can doubt, and which convey to us more than anything else the knowledge—in so far as we can attain to it in this life—of the Son of God made man for us.

The first and most powerful characteristic that we see is love—Divine Love; 'greater love than this no man hath.' It was love that brought Him down from the bosom of His Father to the womb of Mary; love which forced Him to go out from the peaceful seclusion of Nazareth into the dreary highways of the world to seek out the lost sheep of the House of Israel; love which made Him obedient unto death, even unto the death of the Cross, and which made Him joyfully die on it, so that by the shedding of His most Precious Blood He might reconcile sinners to His Father.

But this love was wholly spiritual, and this brings us to another and still more fundamental characteristic of our Divine Saviour, as shown to us in the Scriptures, and that is its supernatural element. It is this which our Lord specially insists upon in the description He gives of Himself to the Precursor. 'Go,' He says to the disciples who were sent to inquire whether indeed He was the Messiah, 'go, and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them; and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me.' (Matt. xi. 4, 6.)

These, then, are the special characteristics or notes by which our Lord in the first instance enlightened John as to the divinity of His mission; but by which, subsequently and to

all time, He enlightens mankind, which, coming to His Church as to Him, again and again repeats the question: 'Who art thou?' To sum up: love is at the root of all that Christ has done for man. It is the Alpha and Omega of His relations with him; it is the cause for which He suspends the laws of nature which He Himself instituted, in order to rescue him from the miseries which flesh is heir to—death, disease, and blindness; and ever as He cures the ills of the body He proceeds to minister to those hidden troubles of the soul and prepares it for the light of faith and the message of salvation. And this message is one addressed to the poor. Till the coming of the Christian era the poor were at a disadvantage; the rich lorded it over them; they were of no account in the eyes of men. But Christ has made all things new, and the poor, the ignorant, the forlorn become the special objects of His care and loving forethought.

All this we can understand; but it is when we come to the last and crowning testimony to the divinity of the Son of God's mission to man, the last proof that He indeed and no other was the Messiah, that we find ourselves utterly at fault, and have to go to Christ Himself, or His Church, for an explanation.

Wherefore, we may well ask, O loving and merciful Saviour, should the world, which Thou hast come to bless, take scandal at Thee? Thy creatures may be puzzled; they may resist Thy call. They may remain unconvinced. Thy wonder-working powers may fail to move them. They may smile at Thy preference of the poor and ignorant to the great and learned; but why, O Saviour of mankind, should they be scandalized in Thee?

Let us go to the Church for an answer to this question, and let us examine, in the light of these notes or characteristics of our Lord, the right the Apostle claims for her of being one Body with Him.

The first characteristic we should look out for is that of

love. If we turn to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, we shall see a vivid picture of the depths of wickedness into which the Pagan world had sunk at the time of the birth of Christ. He says: 'And as they liked not to have God in their knowledge, God delivered them up to a reprobate sense'; that they were 'detractors, hateful to God, contumelious, proud, haughty, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents; foolish, dissolute, without affection, without fidelity, without mercy.' (Rom. i. 28, 30.) This was the state of society in the Pagan world when the little flock to whom our Lord had promised a kingdom took possession of it in His name. They acted literally on the word of our Lord, possessing neither gold nor silver, nor scrip for their journey. They had no worldly influence, no learning, rank, nor status. If some were richer than the others, these divided their possessions with the rest. As the years rolled on and their numbers increased and multiplied, those divine precepts of our Lord (such as community of goods, and others no less trying to human nature), at first acted upon by all her members indiscriminately, were restricted to a certain elect number, to the bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated virgins and widows—the two latter being set apart by the Church, as called by special vocation to minister to the wants of the clergy, and take care of the poor and suffering members of Jesus Christ. From these associations or communities, at first only partially organised, arose, as from a nucleus, all the various religious orders which have since adorned the Church.

Love, therefore, and love actuated by a supernatural motive, love for souls and an ardent desire for their salvation, has ever been a primary characteristic of the Church of Christ; and how unceasingly has she exercised this mission of beneficence since the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended on her first members! Like Christ, her divine Founder and Head, she has never ceased going about doing

good. In all ages she has been the leader and pioneer in all work for the regeneration of mankind. It is owing to her influence, and by her initiation, that hospitals, refuges, and orphanages have grown up in all countries and covered the land. Before her day, the only law that was known was that of justice and severity, the *væ victis*, the woe to him who was weak, who was alone; her voice has ever been raised on the side of mercy and compassion. Before her day lepers were treated as outcasts, denied the very necessaries of life. It was under the influence of the Church, and inspired by her teaching, that so many holy and chosen souls gave up their lives in all ages of her existence to their care and the mitigation of their hideous sufferings. Schools and universities have sprung up and followed in her footsteps, bringing the blessings of peace and enlightenment with them. In her loving desire for the salvation of souls for whom Christ died, she has pushed her conquests in all countries of the earth, so that, in the ages of faith, the discovery of a country such as America or the West Indies was simultaneous with the planting of the Cross of Christ upon it; and it is here that we see, more than anywhere else, the fulfilment of our Lord's prophecy, and the second note of His Church: 'The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again.' Miracles have ever attended the preaching of the Gospel. St. Peter at once, after the ascension of his beloved Master into heaven, proceeded to carry out His injunctions, and works a miracle on the lame man who comes to beg of him. 'Silver and gold I have none,' he says, 'but what I have I give thee;' and he cures him.

Miracles have never ceased in the Church of God. No doubt they are less frequent now than they were in the Apostolic times, partly for the reason given by our Lord for working no miracles in Nazareth, namely because of the unbelief of the people, and also for another reason mentioned

by St. Augustine in his 'Retractations.' He explains that what he had previously said about miracles was not that they had ceased, but that they were less frequent: 'I said that those miracles were not allowed to continue in our times, lest the soul should always seek after the visible. For when hands are laid on the baptized, they do not receive the Holy Ghost now in such a manner as to speak with the tongues of all nations, nor are the sick cured by the shadow of Christ's preachers as they pass by them; but what I said is not so to be understood as if no miracles were believed to be performed now in the name of Christ, for I myself, when I wrote that very book, knew that a blind man had received his sight in the city of Milan, at the bodies of the Milanese martyrs, and several others besides. Nay, such numbers are performed in these our days that I neither can know them all, nor could I enumerate them.'[1]

The earliest recorded histories of the Church are full of miraculous events. Never for a moment was it imagined by the saints who followed the Apostolic Age, such as St. Ambrose, St. Cyprian, St. Athanasius, or St. John Chrysostom, that the time for miracles was restricted to it.

Miraculous events may be said to fill the pages of the annals of the lives of the early saints and martyrs and Fathers of the Church. They cause no astonishment; they are mentioned as any other event would be mentioned. They have evidence given for them, but it is evidence such as would naturally accompany the recital of any other piece of contemporaneous history of a singular nature. So-and-so was cured; such and such a person witnessed it, and so forth. Again, there has never been any break in this chain of miraculous evidence in favour of the Church of God. As

[1] St. Aug. *Retract.* lib. i. cap. 13, § 7. See also Newman *On Miracles.*

she was in the primitive times, so she continued to be in the Middle Ages—when the glorious names of St. Francis Xavier, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa, with their supernatural lives, their heroic virtues, illumined the pages of her history, down to the close of the nineteenth century, which has witnessed the sanctity and miraculous gifts of a Curé d'Ars, a Don Bosco and the holy man of Tours.

The arm of God is not shortened, and His promises to the Church are ever being fulfilled in it. And it is the same with regard to His prophecy to His special children—the Poor. 'The poor have the gospel preached to them.'

In what Church have the poor ever found a friend such as they possess in the Church of Peter?

In the beginning—as we have seen—the Church shared everything in common with the poor; it was to them, first of all, that she delivered the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As this great society grew, and, like the grain of mustard-seed to which our Divine Saviour likened it, spread its branches as a great tree over the whole earth, the poor were ever sheltered beneath them.

Never has the Church interrupted, or faltered in, her divinely intrusted mission of preaching the Gospel to all the nations of the earth, or in providing her children with the means of salvation in the administration of the Sacraments. It was in order to evangelize the poor, to minister to their wants, to provide refuges for the destitute and for orphans, that innumerable religious communities have sprung up in the Church. No Order has done more glorious and lasting work in the missionary field than that of St. Benedict, though its primary object was the chanting of the Divine praises, study, and prayer. The Order of Trinitarians was instituted in the twelfth century by St. John of Matha for the redemption of poor captives. The Apostolic labours of the great Dominican and Franciscan Orders lay among the poor. The Confraternity of St. Antoninus in the fifteenth

century,[1] the Society of Jesus, the Order of Sisters of Charity, founded by St. Vincent of Paul, and all the countless cognate nursing and teaching Orders which grew out of that rule—all these and innumerable others have for their chief and sometimes for their sole object the service of the Son of God in the person of His poor and suffering members.

If we look for traces of this labour of love in any of the other religious bodies which for the last three hundred and fifty years have divided the Christian world with the Catholic Church, what do we see? In many a great and growing spirit of philanthropy, it is true, and an earnest desire to help the lower classes. Also, under pressure from without, through the public press and the ventilation of notorious grievances by its means, and the noble efforts of such heroic laymen as Howard, Lord Shaftesbury, and (among women) Elizabeth Fry, great progress has been made in this country in the direction of a broad and enlightened humanity.[2]

But if we look for a holy unity founded on the basis of immutable truth, where shall we find it out of that Church which alone has earned the title of the Mother of Saints, and was founded on the rock, Peter? Moreover, the Catholic Church, and she alone, can claim that with her it has ever

[1] Mrs. Oliphant thus refers to this work in her *Makers of Florence* (p. 223):—'The nearest parallel we know to this work is to be found in the plan Dr. Chalmers so royally inaugurated in the great town of Glasgow. . . . It is curious to think that the Scotch minister of the nineteenth century was but repeating the idea of the monk in the fifteenth. We are in the habit of thinking a great deal of ourselves and our charities, and of ranking them much more highly than the good works of other nations; but it is nevertheless a fact, that while Dr. Chalmers's splendid essay at Christian legislation died out in less than a generation, and was totally dependent upon one man's influence, Prior Antonino's institution has survived the wear and tear of four hundred years.'

It is a significant fact that no missionary enterprise was inaugurated in England till 1701. The nursing sisterhoods date, with few exceptions, from the latter half of the nineteenth century.

[2] See Appendix I.

been a movement *from within*, an impulse of fervour and zeal from one of her own children—frequently from a minister at her altars—whom the hand of God has made use of to stimulate His children to greater love and effort in His service and that of His poor.

If anyone doubts that the Catholic Church is the friend of the poor let him go to a Catholic country, let him stand at the church door—the earlier the better, let it be when the rich and luxurious are sleeping—and he will see the poor, the ignorant, the forlorn flocking to the Holy Sacrifice. He will see them pray at the altar, kneel at the feet of God's ministers, and go out comforted, and he will realise that God has fulfilled His promise and that the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

Christ ends the description of His work among men by the words: 'And blessed is he who is not scandalized in Me.'

To seize the whole meaning of this saying of our Divine Saviour, we must examine into the history of His intercourse with mankind. From His first appearance in this world of His creation we may safely say that not one of His actions was performed without some divine meaning attached to it, and without conveying a supernatural lesson of deep import. But if the study of these actions of our Divine Saviour has formed matter for the enraptured contemplation and devout admiration of His saints and children in the Church to all succeeding ages, it was not so to the earthly and carnal-minded Jews who witnessed them. If we examine the sacred narrative in detail, the Jews—to whom our Lord's public ministry was addressed, and who thronged round Him to hear Him speak and to see Him work His miracles—divide naturally into three groups: that of the simple-minded and the 'clean of heart,' who eagerly drank in His holy doctrine and received the gift of faith; the Pharisees and Scribes, who followed Him out of curiosity, and laid traps

for Him, hoping to convict Him of error or false statement; and the Rulers, who from the first were jealous of His influence with the people, and plotted to take away His life.

With the first and third we are not concerned, but the second group of witnesses is typical of the world such as it was when our Divine Saviour trod this earthly scene, and such as it will be when He comes at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.

Our Lord enables us in the pages of the Gospel to form an independent opinion, as it were, of His sacred actions and to judge between Him and His accusers. The Scriptures say 'He went about doing good.' He healed the sick, He gave sight to the blind, He raised the dead to life again. More than this, He gave to the world, in the Sermon on the Mount, the pure gospel of Christianity; He consoled the heart of the penitent Magdalen and preached a new doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. He promised His followers a gift beyond all gifts—His flesh, 'to be the life of the world;' and in return what blessings does He reap? It is said of Him that 'He cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils;' and again, according to our Divine Saviour's own words, the Jews said of him: 'Behold a man that is a glutton and a wine-drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners.' Can we doubt that the world, which took scandal at Him then, would do so now, and will ever do so at His Church, which is one with Him—'totus Christus?'

'If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'

'There is eternal enmity between the world and the Church. The Church declares by the mouth of the Apostle, "Whoso shall will to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God;" and the world retorts and calls the

Church apostate, sorceress, Beelzebub, and Antichrist. She is the image and the mother of the predestinate, and if you would be found among her children when you die you must have part in her reproach while you live. Does not the world scoff at all that is glorious, all that is majestic, in our holy religion? Does it not speak against the special creations of God's grace? Does it not disbelieve the possibility of purity and chastity? Does it not slander the profession of celibacy? Does it not deny the virginity of Mary? Does it not cast out her name as evil? Does it not scorn her, as a dead woman, whom you know to be the Mother of all living, and the great Intercessor of the faithful? Does it not ridicule the Saints? Does it not despise the Sacraments? What are we that we should be better treated than our Lord, and His Mother, and His servants, and His works?'[1]

'If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him,' says St. John, who, leaning on our Saviour's Heart, learnt all His secrets from it; and the world is not slow to return this enmity. Other religious bodies it may treat with decent respect, may even throw a good word at them, but of the Catholic Church it has no good word to say. The weapons of calumny and misrepresentation which it used with an unsparing hand against Christ it uses against His Church. At times the world—strange accusation from its mouth!—complains that the Church is too worldly; and at another that she is behind the times, that she is indiscreet that she does not adapt herself to the wants and weaknesses of man. Now it is that she is too rigid, again that she is too lax. 'And the witnesses are not agreed.'

The Church has had her brief moments of triumph too—as her Master had when the Jews strove to take Him and make Him King, or when He rode in triumph through the streets of Jerusalem. But she is more in her element when she is

[1] Newman's *Discourses*, p. 177.

persecuted; then, refreshed with the blood of martyrs, she springs to fresh life, and carries all before her. She has had strange vicissitudes in her history. In the fourth and fifth centuries the Arian heresy divided the Christian world with her, but it ran its course like a virulent disease, and died away and was heard of no more, and she went on. In the sixteenth century her enemies were beginning to triumph; they thought at last she had got her death-blow. All Northern Europe was wrested from her arms, but she found a fresh field for her apostolate in the discovery of a new world, and what she had lost in one hemisphere she more than regained in another. Souls, souls for whom Jesus Christ died, that is ever her cry, and will be till the day when the Son of man, appearing in the clouds of heaven, shall come with great power and majesty to judge the living and the dead.

'Coming to you, then, from the very time of the Apostles, spreading out into all lands, triumphing over a thousand revolutions, exhibiting so awful a unity, glorying in so mysterious a vitality, so majestic, so imperturbable, so bold, so saintly, so sublime, so beautiful, O ye sons of men, can ye doubt that she is the divine messenger for whom ye seek? O long sought after, tardily found, desire of the eyes, joy of the heart, the truth after many shadows, the fulness after many foretastes, the home after many storms, come to her, poor wanderers, for she it is, and she alone, who can unfold the meaning of your being and the secret of your destiny. She alone can open to you the gate of heaven, and put you on your way. "Arise, shine, O Jerusalem; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee; for, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee."'[1]

[1] Newman's *Discourses*, p. 297.

ON DIVINE GRACE

A GREAT appreciation of Divine Grace is most necessary to the growth of spiritual life. We are all of us, as the Apostle says, pilgrims and sojourners upon earth, far from our true home; and our journey is beset with many trials of despondency and weariness, all of which belong to the very conditions of our existence. For our trial must ever be to live by faith, and not by sight; and though we know by the consoling words of our Lord, 'Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed,' that it is one which makes us most pleasing in His sight, nevertheless the instinct of man is ever crying out, with Goethe, for 'light, more light.'

God's answer to this prayer is grace. The natural punishment of sin is darkness—darkness of soul, darkness of understanding, the reign of the spirits of darkness in the heart; and its antithesis is the presence of God by Divine grace in the soul.

To appreciate the treasures of Divine grace we must learn what is said about it by the great Doctors and teachers of the Church.

Grace is, in the first place, an altogether unmerited gift of God, given to us for His Son's sake, by which we are raised from our utter misery and lowliness to the level of the angels, and are made sons of God and children of the Most High.

Again, it is defined to be the love and complacency which

God takes in the soul which He has created, and this love is twofold; for 'as God, having created all things out of love, loves all His creatures ineffably and with most gracious condescension, still He naturally loves the rational more than the irrational, because they are His image and are capable of knowing and loving Him. His Divine complacency rests upon them, because He has created them good as long as they do not offend Him by mortal sin, and remain worthy of His first love by faithful observance of His commandments. In a certain sense, then, the rational creature can, by its nature already and its natural good works, merit the favour and love of God. For the same reason we may, according to St. Augustine, call every natural good and gift of God a grace, since God was not obliged to create us, and has given us all these natural goods out of gratuitous love.

'But when once He has created us, He must, as a good and wise Creator, love us as His creatures, and grant us all those things that are indispensably necessary to attain our natural destiny. That favour and grace, then, which we have just mentioned, is grace only in a general sense of the word. Nor is it the *Christian* grace, which Christ has brought into the world, and which His Gospel, His Apostles, the holy Fathers, and the Church proclaim. This is grace in the highest and strictest sense of the word; *a very particular, gratuitous, condescending, and full* grace of God which makes us His particular favourites.

'By the first kind of grace God loves us, as we deserve it on account of our nature and our natural good works. By the latter grace, however, He loves us in a very particular manner, in a supernatural manner, infinitely more than we would deserve according to our nature. From pure and spontaneous love He descends from the height of His royal throne to our lowliness, in order to elevate us infinitely above our nature. He loves us with an unbounded and overflowing love, as much, so to speak, as is in His power;

He loves us as Himself, and as His only begotten Son; He assumes, therefore, our soul as His child, His friend, His spouse, makes it the associate of His own glory and happiness, and gives Himself to the soul for eternal possession and enjoyment.' [1]

We may well ask to what we owe this miracle, this astounding condescension of the Divine goodness. The Saints and Doctors of the Church tell us that the explanation of this mystery is found in the doctrine of the Incarnation of our Lord. And for this reason: God, in taking on Himself our human nature, did not so much lower Himself to our level as, through His infinite power and goodness, He raised all mankind, through divine grace, to His. Thus the Church, in the Epistle of the Sunday in the octave of the Nativity, proclaims to the world the great and surpassing truth that 'when the fulness of the time was come God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. Therefore now he is not a servant, but a son; and if a son, an heir also through God.' (Gal. iv. 4, 6.)

The priest daily in Holy Mass says: 'O God, let us partake of His Divinity who has deigned to partake of our humanity.' And this equalization, this balance between the humiliation of God and the elevation of man by grace, has so deep a reason that the holy Fathers teach that the Son of God was made man on account of grace to elevate us by grace. 'God was made man that man might be made God,' says St. Augustine; 'the Son of God was made the Son of man that the children of men might be made the children of God.' Again, we are told: 'This difference only exists

[1] *Glories of Divine Grace*, p. 20. Dr. Scheeben's work, from which we have drawn largely, will well repay perusal.

between the soul of Christ and our own: the soul of the Son of God has every claim and right to grace, and does not receive it as a gratuitous gift, but merits it; it receives it directly, and in exceeding abundance; and finally the soul of Christ can in no wise lose grace, whilst our soul receives grace as a gratuitous gift through Christ, in a limited measure, and may easily lose it again by sin.' [1]

These benefits, then, which are so great, so inestimable that the Saints, when treating of them, seem at a loss to find words to express all they feel at the sight of the goodness and mercy of God, as exemplified by them, are earned for us by the death of Jesus Christ, and we are entitled to them only by fulfilling the conditions to which they are attached.

To learn what these conditions are we must turn to the Gospel of St. John. In the sermon of the last Supper we read, as it were, our Lord's last Will and Testament to His beloved Apostles and disciples. In this great and solemn moment, when He had just given them a pledge of His unspeakable love, His own Body and Blood under the appearance of bread and wine, and was about to give them another of which He Himself said, 'Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend,' for the first time He discloses to them the secrets of divine grace. He chose that moment to speak to them of that closest of all unions, symbolized under the figure of the vine and its branches, which was to subsist evermore between Him and His chosen flock, the Church which He came on earth to found, and which, incorporated into Him by baptism and united by grace, was to be one with Him for ever in heaven by glory.

'I am the true vine,' He tells us, 'and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit

[1] *Glories of Divine Grace*, pp. 76, 77.

He will take away; and every one that beareth fruit He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean by reason of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.' (John xv. 1, 4.)

Again, in His sublime prayer to His Heavenly Father, our Lord, after praying for His Apostles and disciples, says:

'And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me. That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.' (John xvii. 20.)

In these marvellous words our Divine Saviour explains to His Apostles the nature of that supernatural union which henceforth was to exist between Himself and all souls united to Him by sanctifying grace—a union so close that no bond between mother and child or husband and wife, or binding friend to friend, can for one moment be compared with it. For in all these relationships, however close and ardent the attachment, the two souls must for ever remain apart; they may love, but they can never wholly blend into one. But of this union between the soul and Jesus Christ the Apostle does not hesitate to say, 'He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.' For could union be imagined closer than that which subsists between a tree and its branches? Both must draw their life and nutriment from the same source. They are not joined together, but, in very deed, one. It is not, therefore, without a deep significance that our Lord expounded this heavenly doctrine to His disciples after first instituting the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. In this Sacrament He gave Himself to His disciples, but though His bodily presence passed away with the accidents of the sacramental veil, His spiritual presence was to remain

with them for ever. Sin alone[1] could expel this Divine Guest from their souls, and separate them from Him who was to be in very deed one with them as He was one with His Father, because, according to St. Paul—who puts the same great truth under a different figure—'we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.' But, great and signal as these benefits were, our Divine Saviour had yet another in store, which He designed to bestow on His disciples.

He had said: 'With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer'; and again it was said of Him: 'Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end'; and now we come to the last proof He was to give of His loving care of His children. He said: 'I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever.' And again: 'It is expedient to you that I go, for if not the Paraclete will not come to you.' No words can express the greatness of this last gift of God the Son to man, but the words of the Apostle explain whence it comes to us. 'The charity of God,' he says, 'is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.'

It is love, therefore, the love of Jesus for man, the longing desire He had to take possession of the hearts of His children, which prompted this gift; because, as the Fathers of the Church explain, as the Holy Ghost is the personal representative of the mutual love of the Father and the Son, from whence He proceeds, and love is the cause of the union between God and the soul of man, so it is fitting that this Divine Guest should be the seal set on the soul and impressing it with the Divine image, and so, as St. Paul says, transforming it 'from glory to glory.'

To what a wonderful dignity does this Divine gift raise

[1] A soul whilst in mortal sin is no longer a living member of the mystical body of Jesus Christ.

the souls and even the bodies of men! 'Know you not,' says the Apostle, 'that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?' God has purchased us with a great price, the price of His own most Precious Blood, and so, though of ourselves separated from Him, cut off from the Vine, we are utterly worthless, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, 'we are made,' to quote once more Dr. Scheeben, 'partakers of the Divine nature and true children of God, and the works which we perform in this grace are Divine, heavenly works. We thus stand in a relation of equality to heavenly glory, and when God promises us this glory He promises it as an inheritance and a reward, which is not above the dignity of our person and the value of our works. . . . The good works which we perform by nature only, as mere servants of God, have not been promised a heavenly reward by God; they could not even expect such a reward; they are in no proportion whatever to the dignity of heavenly happiness, and God would have too much depreciated the infinite value of His heaven by offering it for such a low and limited price. Even the supernatural works which we perform without the state of grace by means of actual graces and the virtues of faith and hope are not worthy of heaven. . . . But when we have been actually made children of God by grace, and embrace Him with filial love, then all the good works which we perform with the help of grace are so many filial services which God can reward, worthily, only with His kingdom and all the riches of His heaven. It always remains true that in the first place Christ, the Son of God, and not we, merited heaven, and that we can only merit it through Christ.' [1]

All the merits, therefore, of the actions of man, whether it be the glorious labours of the Apostles, the sufferings and constancy of the martyrs, the treasure of holiness in all the

[1] *Glories of Divine Grace*, pp. 272–3.

saints of God's Church, derive their value from the merits of the Precious Blood of Jesus shed for us on the Cross, and without the indwelling of the Holy Ghost through sanctifying grace in our souls these labours would be of no avail. United to Him by grace, we become one with Him, and we 'abide with Him and He in us.'

'As the iron is in the fire, and the fire in it, as the fire entirely absorbs the iron and consumes it, as it were, so that they no longer appear to be distinct, so the fire of the Divinity penetrates our soul and receives it so entirely that it seems to be God Himself. . . . Thus that great mystery is prepared and begun in us which, according to the word of the Apostle, will form the highest perfection of created nature, that *God will be all in all.* God is all in us, not only because He has created us, not only because our whole nature and being is dependent on Him, not only because we are His, as the work of His hands, and reveal His glory, but because He has drawn us entirely into Himself and poured Himself out in us, because He absorbs us, and unites us to Himself. . . . Let us not fear to lose ourselves in this ineffable union with God. We are lost in an unfathomable abyss, but an abyss not of annihilation and darkness, but of the greatest glory and happiness. We lose ourselves to find ourselves again in God, or rather to find God Himself, with His whole glory and beatitude. For the more we are God's the more He is ours; the more we live in Him and for Him, the more He lives in us and for us.'[1] Thus when grace unites us wholly to God we need no longer tremble at the assaults of the evil one, nor shall we have so much to fear from those seeds of concupiscence—the *fomes peccati*—which are a part of our very nature, for the Holy Ghost will give us great confidence in times of temptation. As the Psalmist has said, 'God shall be in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.' St. Augustine, when he had once broken the chain of

[1] *Glories of Divine Grace*, pp. 194–5.

slavery which bound him to a life of profligacy, and had given himself up to the service of God, cries: 'How sweet on a sudden was it become to me to be without the sweets of those toys! And what I was before so much afraid to lose I now cast from me with joy. For Thou, O my God, didst expel them from me, and didst come Thyself instead of them, sweeter than any pleasure whatever!'[1] For grace, coming to the aid of man, gives wings to his soul and causes it to fly; when left to himself he could but limp or painfully stumble and crawl. Accordingly, Lallemant teaches that a soul that has surrendered itself wholly to the guidance of the Holy Ghost will make more progress in one day than another who labours indeed at the eradication of his sins and acquisition of the contrary virtues, but without entirely trusting to the Divine Spirit, does in many months; and by way of comparison he instances the difference between a boat labouring heavily, impelled only by oars, to one which, with sail set, goes gaily before a favourable wind.

This facility in the service of God, which the Apostle calls 'running in the way of God's commandments,' is due to the infused theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are the special reward of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the soul—as the Council of Trent teaches—and the mark of His presence there. These infused virtues give immense lustre to the soul, imparting to it such splendour and beauty that the saints have told us that if we could see a soul closely united to God by sanctifying grace we should be struck speechless with admiration, and should even be ready to fall down and worship it. They go further, for they say it excites the admiration of our great and merciful God Himself; for they interpret the words of the Spouse of the Canticle, 'How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou,' to mean

[1] *Conf.* bk. ix. ch. 1.

the exclamation of God Himself dwelling on the beauty of the chaste soul.

Again, the merits of Christ and His saints belong to a soul in a state of grace, so that it shines, as it were, with a reflected glory, for grace makes us living members of Christ. The branches are one with the Vine, and the more we approach, with devout minds and hearts, our lips to that living fountain of grace the Holy Eucharist, the more does the heavenly sap enter into our souls, transforming them into the likeness of God. The Psalmist cries out, 'I am a partaker with all them that fear Thee and keep Thy commandments.' So let us not fear to avail ourselves of the privileges of divine grace. The more miserable and weak we know ourselves to be, the more confidently let us trust to the merits of Christ and the intercession of the Saints. Our prayers may be tepid, our labours intermittent, we may falter on the path of perfection, but let us join ourselves to that glorious company, and instantly our prayers and our efforts will have a virtue not their own.

This, then, is the great treasure which Christ, having purchased for us through His passion and death, puts into the hands of each one of us children of His Church. It is the treasure 'hidden in a field,' which having found, 'for joy thereof' we should sell all we have in order to possess it. Or, again, it is like the pearl of great price, which the merchant having found, 'he went his way and sold all he had and bought it.' And it is one which it lies in our power, each one of us according to our degree and capacity, by God's help to acquire, and having acquired, to increase ten and twenty and a hundred fold. As long as we are in a state of grace (that is, that our souls are free from mortal sin and so united to Jesus Christ our Divine Head), each moment of the day may be made a source of grace to us. Every act of love of God, every temptation resisted, every charitable action done for our neighbour, with a supernatural motive—that is, recognizing

God's image in our brother, and performed *as for Him*—earns an increase of grace for us now, and an addition to our eternal glory hereafter. Especially is this true with regard to acts done purely for the love of God. St. Catherine learned from a Divine revelation that our actions were pleasing to Him *not* in proportion to the labour bestowed on them, or the sacrifices made in their accomplishment, but simply on account of the love with which we accompanied them.

Love of God, and of man for His sake, is the secret of Divine grace.

How often we hear the good and pious lament (converts specially have often to suffer from this trial) that their hands are tied, they have no money to spend in the service of God or the poor; they have perhaps hardly time or opportunity of going to Mass or the Sacraments! Well, let them love; let them pray. Let them unite their intention daily with the chorus of praise and thanksgiving and adoration which is unceasingly being offered to God by the Church militant on earth and the Church triumphant in heaven. Then their voices and supplications will acquire instantly a great power—a supernatural power—in comparison to which all the efforts which they could make, humanly speaking, in the service of God would be as dross compared to pure gold. We live in days when everything is judged by tangible results, and even Catholics are tempted to be misled by them and to think that nothing can be done without money and science and education. But the ways of God are not changed, and as He chose twelve poor and ignorant men to preach His Gospel, so will it be with His Church to the end. Prayer, evangelical poverty, love of God and souls—these are the great means by which we shall convert our fellow-countrymen; but especially prayer that God may send labourers to the harvest; for again it is now as it was then: the harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few.

Before concluding this chapter it would be well to say a

few words about our means of acquiring Divine grace. As was said in the beginning, grace is an unmerited, gratuitous gift of God, and no human being, however pure, can of himself merit it. Our Lord has said, 'No man can come to Me unless the Father draw him;' and the Apostle explains, 'We are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.' And therefore, from the first step we make in the service of God to the last—the crowning grace of final perseverance—we owe all to the free and gratuitous gift of God. Nevertheless, though we can do nothing of ourselves to deserve this heavenly favour, for all, even to our disposing of ourselves to receive it, is a gift of God, still this need not lead us to slacken in our efforts to acquire Divine grace; for we know that God is ever ready—nay longing—to bestow it on all who humbly seek it of Him. Not only this, but He goes before us, by His prevenient and actual graces (as they are called), inviting us to return to Him when we have gone astray, or, if we have never left the shelter of His House, attracting us by means of these graces to a closer and yet closer union with Him.

So let us never lose courage, either for ourselves or for others whom we know to be outwardly separated from the unity of the faith. For, according to the inspired word, *Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum*, the Spirit of God is over the entire earth. We can never be so utterly lost, or sunk in sin, that God does not pursue us with His gracious inspirations. The parable of the Prodigal Son is the history of God's fatherly dealings with man in all times and nations, whether the Prodigal be one plunged in sin or 'in a far country,' that is, entangled in heresy or unbelief, and so far from the Church, his true home. And first of all we read how the Holy Ghost brings misfortune to bear upon him, in order to soften his heart, and then inspires him with a disgust of 'the husks of swine' and a desire to return to his Father's house. And then the same Holy Spirit reminds him how many

hired servants in his Father's house abound with bread, 'and I here perish with hunger.' Finally, grace triumphs in his heart, and he makes the confession, 'I will arise, and will go to my Father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.' 'And rising up he came to his father, and when he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck, and kissed him'; and, calling all his family together, he rejoices with them over him: 'for this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found.'

What can we add to these words replete with joy and comfort, except that the mercies of God are unspeakable, and 'if we should contend with Him we shall not answer Him one in a thousand'? But if God treats with such loving leniency those who have wandered from Him in the paths of sin, with what even greater indulgence will He treat those to whom He says: 'Thou art always with me, and all I have is thine'! Let us not fear, then, to approach constantly to the throne of His mercy, especially by receiving Him in Holy Communion as often as our director allows us, for theologians teach that whereas in every other sacrament we receive God's grace, in this we receive the very source of grace, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself. Every Communion we partake of devoutly in a state of grace unites us more closely to God, increases sanctifying grace in our souls, and so adds to the merit of every action we subsequently perform, and thus to our degree of glory in the next world for all eternity, besides rendering us more pleasing in the sight of God.

Many are ambitious for distinction in this life, but if it is ever hinted to them that they might turn to account for the next this desire to excel and to rise in life, they are ready to scoff at the idea. How often one hears it said: 'I shall be

quite satisfied if I occupy the lowest place in heaven, if only I manage to get there at all.' This may sound like humility, but is it really so? In the first place, *are we our own* to do what we like with? The words of Holy Writ are conclusive, showing us that we belong to God utterly, by right of purchase as well as by right of creation; therefore we have no option but to ascertain His will concerning us. God has put us into the world for one end only, that we should love Him and serve Him with all our hearts, and give Him the greatest honour and glory we are capable of. Our Lord's prayer to His Father the night before He suffered, 'I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do,' are words we should meditate upon deeply and frequently. In our measure and degree we are all given a work to do on earth, and it is upon our performance of this work that we shall be judged at the last day. The question, therefore, for us to consider is how we should stand with regard to it if we were at this present moment summoned to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. God gives each man a special vocation, and the graces He bestows on him are such as are fitted for him to work out his salvation in that particular calling or vocation.

The poor man is given patience, fortitude, or whatever is necessary to render his way of life profitable to him; but how often, instead of consoling himself with the thought that God has seen fit to place him in the lot where he is least exposed to dangers and temptation, and has the blessed example of Christ to encourage and assist him through life, he loses all the merit of the privations he undergoes by discontent and envy of those who are above him in rank or station!

On the other hand, those who have a sufficiency of this world's goods are equally discontented because they have not more. The rich find other causes of complaint. In every station of life we are ever readier to bear any cross

rather than our own. It is equally so with sickness, and the other trials God sees fit to send us. We readily imagine that if we were in health we should find more scope for our energies in God's service than we do when laid upon a bed of sickness; on the other hand, God signifies by that very illness which He sends us the virtues He desires us to practise. As the saint of interior life, St. Francis of Sales, says: 'When He desires us to serve Him by suffering, we desire to serve Him by action. When He wishes us to practise patience, we wish to practise humility, devotion, prayer, or some other virtue, not because it is more to His liking, but more to ours. . . . Remember that our Lord directs us to take up our cross and follow Him. If, then, we wish to carry our cross after Him, we must imitate Him by receiving indifferently whatever happens to us, without choice or exception.'

A devout servant of God had his past life revealed to him under the figure of an orchard carpeted with fallen buds and blossom. Have we not all reason to fear that such a sight—one of abuse of grace and neglected opportunities—will meet us on our entrance into eternity? An earnest desire, therefore, to profit by the grace God sees fit to bestow on us in order to give Him as much glory as we are capable of, and by a faithful correspondence with it to reach the degree of happiness in heaven to which He has eternally destined us, should be one of the chief objects of our lives; remembering always the words of St. Augustine, that 'God in rewarding us crowns His own gifts.'

THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE

If the great object of a Christian's life, as we have tried to show in the previous chapter, should be to aim at union with God through Divine grace, the question will naturally be asked how this is to be accomplished. The answer is a simple one: We must try to supernaturalize our lives.

To supernaturalize our lives does not mean that we are to change our manner of living. To the outward eye no difference need be visible; it is the *soul*, as it were, of our actions which should be changed. The lives we lead, let it be assumed, are innocent—possibly virtuous; but if they have for their object human ends, we must substitute for these a supernatural end: that is, the love and service of God, and an intention to use creatures merely as a means of attaining to Him, in order to render Him that homage which it is His will to receive at our hands.

To do this, or rather to aim at doing this, for this transformation is not to be effected in a day, is to take upon us the yoke of Christ. It also makes our lives a real *service* of God, in fact as well as in name.

Perhaps the claims of the poor, our duties to our neighbour, have long been subjects of earnest consideration to us, whether as Catholics or as members of other communions. Possibly we have taken a benevolent pleasure in helping those around us, in visiting the sick and in consoling the

afflicted, and God has sent us a reward—an earthly reward—in the peace and satisfaction of our consciences, and the love and gratitude of all around us. But our Divine Lord will ask more of us now that we belong to Him by closer ties, as a father asks more of his children than he does of his hired servants. He will ask more of us in order that He may reward us more, for He wishes to give us an eternal reward, Himself and a share of His glory for all eternity; and so He asks us to do for Him what hitherto we have done from motives of philanthropy, for our own satisfaction, or perhaps for the world's applause. This is the perfection which He asks of His children: 'Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.' And as our Lord spoke this word to all the crowd gathered round Him, to His disciples, to the women who followed Him, to the children who clustered round His knees, we are to learn that the perfection He asks is not restricted to a particular life, or age, or sex. It is possible to be perfect earning one's bread at the plough or at the merchant's desk, or leading a prosperous life in the world, provided we look to God in all things, keep His interests ever in view, and use creatures only as means of attaining to Him who is our one true end.

This is our real vocation, and one about which we can never be under any delusion.

To all vocations particular graces are attached; to the priest or monk the grace to exercise the sacred ministry, to the nun to sanctify herself in the service of her Divine Spouse; but to all, and equally to those living in the world, to fathers and mothers, as to their families, our Lord offers this simple means of acquiring perfection. The labourer who rises at the earliest dawn to go out to his daily work, and accepts the drudgery and privations of life as an act of submission to the Holy Will from a motive of love, is as pleasing to God—in his measure and degree—as the religious who rises to sing His praises.

On the other hand, rank and wealth are no obstacles to perfection.

God having instituted the principle of authority, and having by birth or circumstances indicated that it is His divine will that a man should occupy a certain position in the world, that life is as pleasing in His sight and as sure a road to Him as any other. But to make it meritorious we must take it from His hands, submitting to His yoke, in the world but not of it, and using the gifts of fortune—in other words creatures—in such a manner that at any moment we are ready to give an account of our stewardship when He, the great Master of the household, comes to demand it of us. Considered in this light, our lives may be looked upon as a servitude, and it will be objected, how can this be made to tally with what the Apostle tells us of the liberty of the children of God? How can we be in service and yet free? To answer this we must consider for a moment what we are and whence we came.

God made us out of nothing, and but for His sustaining power, every moment exerted, we should fall back into the nothingness from whence we come. 'Shall I not do what I will with you, O House of Israel'? He said to His rebellious people. 'As clay is in the hands of the potter, so are you in my hands.' God has a right—a supreme right—to our services. We are born therefore to serve, and it is our noblest prerogative.

Moreover, to serve is in our nature. We cannot evade it, we cannot stand alone; if we serve not God we serve our own selfish instincts, our own bad passions. If not God, then the world and the devil. The man of the world, who flatters himself he calls no man master, is in reality under a ruthless tyranny; habits of sin, luxuries which have become a second nature to him, the world's opinion, its frowns and its applause—all rule him, and with a rod of iron. God's children alone enjoy true liberty, and St. Augustine says,

'Love God and do what you will.' The heart which is wholly centred in God and loves creatures only in Him and for His sake soars above life's vicissitudes. It is set free from the entanglements of earthly cares and passions, and when sorrows come—as they do sooner or later to all—what light, what assistance are given, almost as a right, to those who have been accustomed to see God in all things, and to accept every dispensation of life as coming straight from His hand! It is to them that the Apostle addresses those words: 'For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.'[1] To serve God, then, is not only our duty, it is also our interest—our highest interest—both for this world and for the world to come; but to be a true service it must be a faithful one. It is easy to be pious every now and then, to pray when the spirit moves us, and then to fall back on the world for amusement and consolation till the inclination returns. But God requires more than this; and our Saviour in His teaching to the disciples, and continually in His parables, brings this great truth before us, that *at all times* when He comes He expects to find us watching, and not only watching, but also working for Him.

Perhaps there is no incident in the Gospel more striking than that of our Lord, journeying from Jerusalem and being hungry, seeing 'afar off a fig-tree having leaves, and He came, if perhaps He might find something on it. And He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the time for figs. And answering He said, May no man eat fruit of thee any more for ever. And the disciples heard it.'

Many and deep are the lessons spiritual writers have drawn from this passage of the Gospel. In the first place, they have seen in the barren fig-tree a type of the souls of men. 'His people are the fig-tree, Jerusalem is the

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 17.

fig-tree, each one created to His image and redeemed by His Sacred Blood is the fig-tree. Our poor souls are each His fig-tree.'[1] And our Lord seeing us afar off—for how far have we not wandered at times from Him, in the paths of sin, along the broad and easy road which leads to destruction!—is hungry. He who has said, 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice,' hungers and longs unspeakably for the souls of men, and when He visits them it is to find leaves—that is, an appearance of virtue, an outward profession—but 'no fruit.' To attain to a deeper comprehension of the meaning of these words let us turn to those which God puts into the mouth of Jeremias. 'Thus saith the Lord God, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord . . . Blessed be the man that trusteth in the Lord, and the Lord shall be His confidence. And he shall be as a tree that is planted by the waters, that spreadeth out its roots towards moisture, and it shall not fear when the heat cometh. And the leaf thereof shall be green, and in the time of drought it shall not be solicitous, *neither shall it cease at any time to bring forth fruit.*'[2]

To be true servants of God, then, we must not cease at any time to bring forth fruit. But is it so difficult? In other words, is our Lord asking impossibilities of us—in spite of His saying that 'His yoke is sweet and His burthen light'—or is He asking of us something quite easy of accomplishment, if only we are 'men of good will' in deed as well as in name?

In the first place, of what are the lives of the great majority of men composed? Probably a good deal of work, a certain amount of recreation and amusement, a little prayer and service of God or of their neighbours. Now all these things are innocent in themselves, and may be made meritorious in the highest degree, if done for a pure

[1] *Watches of the Passion*, i. 191. [2] Jer. xvii. 5–10.

intention: that is, offered up for the greater honour and glory of God.

The Apostle tells us, 'Whether we eat or whether we drink, let us do all for the greater honour and glory of God.' We read in the life of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi that she was accustomed to stop her nuns as she met them going about their daily avocations in the convent, and to ask them for whom they were working, or nursing the sick, or performing any other useful or necessary work, and if they could not say that they were doing it with the express intention of giving glory to God, she would incite them to begin again with renewed fervour to work for this intention.

We all know the story of St. Charles Borromeo: how on one occasion the conversation happened to turn upon what all present would wish to do if they were only given another day to live. Some said they would instantly go and make a general confession, and others said they would spend the remaining time in prayer. Finally, when St. Charles was asked what he would do, he answered he would go on with his present occupation (which was playing a game of chess), as, having begun it for the greater honour and glory of God, he desired nothing better than to die whilst engaged in working, or even amusing himself, with that end and object.

In aiming at making every part of our day fruitful by a direct intention of pleasing God by it, we shall arrive at another very important result. It will enable us to get, by this means, a better grasp of our lives, and also it will be a great help to the acquisition of a deep and solid humility, by revealing to us all the hidden depths of our nature, which is ever seeking to put *self* and its ends and aims in the place of God.

This intention of serving God and pleasing Him in all things is, besides, a touchstone which exhibits many of our actions to us in their true light. Our lives, perhaps, are taken up with worldly ambitions, in which self-advancement

plays the most prominent part, or we trifle them away in frivolous occupations, or in conversation in which, on reviewing it, we find we have drifted ever so far from the maxims of the Gospel. How can we bring these words and thoughts to the sacred Heart of Jesus? How can we offer up our loss of time, our repinings, our extravagance in luxuries, in food, or in pleasures at the feet of Him whose every word and action in His human life was a contradiction and rebuke to ours?

This practice leads also to the acquisition of another most important habit, which is that of keeping ourselves in the presence of God.

St. Teresa tells us, in one of her treatises on the interior life, that in the same way as fish living in the water are surrounded by it, and swim about, and move and breathe in it, so do we breathe, and move, and *even sin* in God.

To what terrible reflections this thought should give rise in the breast of the unrepentant sinner! But to those who desire to serve God how full of consolation is it! He is then very near us—our God, our own God, as the Psalmist calls Him—attentive to our cry, and ready to raise us up when we fall, with tenderest love and compassion, remembering our feeble condition, 'our frame, and that we are dust'! And this thought that He is very near us will free us more than any other from that human spirit which is a very pitfall to beginners in the interior life, which makes us look to success in spiritual things, and in work which we have undertaken for God, as we should in temporal concerns; for in God there is neither success nor failure. We are labourers in His vineyard, as He tells us in His parables. We are His helpers to gather in His harvest, as the Apostle St. Paul puts it: 'I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase.' Or, as we read elsewhere: 'One sows and another reaps.'

God has no need of any of us, but He allows us—nay more,

He commands us to work for Him; and in His mercy He rewards us in a manner which even to our small knowledge of heavenly things is incomprehensible for the little we do for Him, for, as the Scripture tells us, 'the preparation of our hearts is agreeable to Him.' 'We exist on earth,' Ozanam says, 'only to do the will of God. This will is fulfilled day by day, and he who dies, leaving his work unfinished, is in the same position in the sight of God as he is who has been spared to bring it to completion.'

This is the great lesson of the Crucifix. Could there be a greater apparent failure than Christ's mission on earth, culminating as it did in the ignominious death on the Cross? But at that moment, when the world and the spirits of evil triumphed, how stupendous and all-embracing was the victory of the Son of man, and its consequences to the human race in the sight of God! From that moment, as He Himself prophesied, being lifted up He has drawn all creation up to Himself, and however much man may struggle he can never free himself from the inward consciousness of all that that Death involves.

It means, in the first place, that we must fight the world with supernatural weapons, and that we must be ever prepared for defeat. What the weapons are which the world employs we know well. They are riches, power, knowledge, and influence. Of all these things it might be said that not only can they be used in God's service, but that often they are so used, for they are creatures of God given us with a special object, and intended to be employed as ladders, by means of which we raise ourselves to God. But if the Word had become Incarnate to teach this doctrine only, that riches and knowledge should be used for a good end, it would differ in nothing from the views held by the Jews before His coming; for they looked for prosperity in this world as a reward of virtue and the wise use of the world's gifts.

Christ's announcement to His disciples was that He 'came

to make all things new.' In His Sermon from the Mount He preached to them a doctrine such as had never before been given to man. Till then, to be meek was to be down-trodden; to be poor in spirit was to be wanting in all the great qualities of a man. To mourn was to be under the ban of God, and to be persecuted unjustly, to lose faith in His omnipotence.

But in the sight of Jesus all these things were reversed. Man for the first time heard in what his beatitude consisted. To the poor in spirit the kingdom of God is allotted; to the meek, the possession of the land. The mourners are to be comforted, not here, but in their heavenly Home; and, stranger than all, Jesus announces, 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly, for My sake: Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.'

How should we understand this unless Jesus crucified, a Divine object-lesson for ever to man, had Himself taught it, speaking to his *heart* from the Cross—inwardly, deeply, lovingly, to the poor even as to the rich, in language not to be misunderstood, to all nations, and tribes, and peoples?

In truth He has 'made all things new.' The Psalmist cries that his faith was almost shaken, 'his feet were well-nigh moved, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked.' Can we be astonished, therefore, if the Jews refused to accept these doctrines, which entirely revolutionized everything that they had ever heard of or imagined? They had been taught to expect a Messiah who would inaugurate a reign of peace and prosperity, the triumph of their race and nation. Even His chosen disciples (before the Holy Spirit had descended upon them) still clung to this belief, as we know from their last recorded words to their Master: 'Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?'

It was not enough that they had seen the Messiah, had followed Him throughout His public career, had seen Him

persecuted, fleeing from His enemies, in want of a spot whereon to lay His head, dying on the Cross; they required the Holy Ghost, whom Jesus, having ascended to the Father, sent to them, in order 'to teach them all truth,' to enlighten them, and bring this lesson home to them. Before taking leave of His disciples on the eve of His Passion, our Divine Saviour had said to them: 'I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.' Is there anything in the teaching of our Lord harder for flesh and blood to bear than this?

If we take a general view of the scheme of creation (such as it has been revealed to us), and of man's fall, we see that two views of his redemption were open to man before the coming of the Messiah.

Christ could have redeemed man—as the Jews fondly believed He would do—by reversing the penalties of Adam's fall, by introducing a Millennium of peace and plenty, and restoring the fallen fortunes of the Jewish race. But there was another way, a higher, because a more supernatural one, and this was the one chosen by the Son of God. By assuming the nature of man He lifted him out of his miserable fallen state; adopted him (as St. Paul says) as His brother, co-heir to the kingdom which he had forfeited; gave him seven channels of grace in the Sacraments, which were to stand him in good stead in all the varying circumstances of life, a medicine and pledge of immortality in the Sacrament of the Eucharist; and finally, by submitting Himself to the punishment of death, He robbed it of half its terrors, so that the Apostle could exclaim: 'O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?'

'*Felix culpa!*' the Church sings in the office of Holy Saturday: happy fault of Eve which was so gloriously atoned. Happy indeed to the spiritual man, looking upon all things here below as passing away, himself as passing away with them, and whose eyes are fixed on a glorious eternity. But what

share has the man of the world, the ambitious, the sensual man, in this blessed prospect? In order to answer this question we must pass in review the kind of life Jesus Christ calls upon us to follow: in other words, the supernatural life.

The supernatural life may be defined as the one the Christian soul leads here below with Jesus Christ by sanctifying grace, and which, if persevered in to the end, will be crowned by Him in a happy eternity.

To ascertain the nature of this life is not difficult. The Scripture puts it before us plainly; we are told to walk 'so as ye have your model.'

Our model, accordingly, is the Son of God made man for us, and no doubt our first instinct is to cry out against the impossibility of aiming at such heights of sanctity, a perfection so exalted as that of our Divine Saviour; but if we come to inquire more closely into the matter, and examine into it in the light of the teaching of Jesus to His disciples, how utterly different is the prospect which opens out before us! It is to the soul, the heart of man, that the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is ever directed, and it is in this light we must read the words of St. Paul. The outward circumstances of our lives are nothing to Him except inasmuch as they bear on our interior lives; and thus by submitting Himself as a model to us, as He does by His Apostle, or bidding us to take example of Him when teaching us a lesson of meekness and humility ('Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart'), or when He tells us to follow Him, our Lord is ever emphasizing the same great fact: that it is to the heart of man that he is addressing Himself.

This is the secret of the liberty of the children of God: a key to many an enigma, explaining much which otherwise would be ambiguous in the history of our Divine Saviour. The Scribes and Pharisees took scandal at this holy freedom of Christ's life. They were shocked at

His working His miracles on the Sabbath, at His feasting with sinners, at His breaking through their rigid rules of fasting,[1] and allowing His disciples to do the same. How could these 'whitened sepulchres,' these hypocrites who performed all their works to be seen by men, who made broad their phylacteries and enlarged their fringes, and loved the first chairs in the synagogues, how could they—whose religion consisted of a number of outward observances—understand the divine and supernatural teaching contained in the actions of the Son of man? In the Gospel of St. Luke we are told that the Chief Priests and the Scribes sent spies to Jesus, hoping to entangle Him in His words, so that they might report Him to the governor, and they asked Him if it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, and He said: 'Show me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answering said to Him, Cæsar's. And He said: Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' This is the conclusive answer, the last word which Christ gives to man, settling to all time between His own claim and the claims of the world; and from it we see that unless by a special call or vocation (with regard to which we shall have a word to say later) God enters into no competition with man, with regard to the outward circumstances of his life.

God's call to man is an inward one. The prayer of Christ for His disciples was: 'I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil.' He is content to take man—if we may say so—as He finds him. By His own example He preaches resignation to the poor, seeing that He chose his lot, with its trials and privations, in preference to any other in order to show him how they should be borne. To the rich, to those with learning, influence, and position, He speaks in the parable of the talents, telling them that all these things

[1] See Appendix II.

are to be used for a good end. 'Trade,' He seems to say, 'till I come. Go forth into the world, lead useful lives as soldiers, statesmen, merchants, fathers and mothers of families. All this is open to you.' One only thing He reserves to Himself.

He tells us that He is a jealous God, and the first and greatest commandment is that we love the Lord our God with our whole hearts, and our whole souls, and all our minds, and all our strength.

One thing only He reserves to Himself—our hearts. One thing He forbids: that we should throw ourselves so utterly into the pursuit of riches, pleasures, or power as to forget Him—the Creator—in His creatures.

Where our treasure is, there also is our heart. If our treasure is on earth, if our minds are engrossed with worldly concerns, our hearts with earthly affections, how impossible we find it to keep them detached, how tempted we are to cling to earth and forget heaven! This is the meaning of so much that seems obscure to us as long as we see things, here below, 'as in a glass, darkly.'

God deals with us often as a tender mother does with her children, putting things out of their reach that are a danger to them. They weep perhaps, and clamour to her to relent, but she knows too well to give in.

The Abbé Gerbet, in a letter to Alexandrine[1] (in the 'Récit d'une Sœur'), tells her that whilst he was engaged in writing, a moth, attracted by the lamp, flew into the room and tried to get nearer and ever nearer to the flame, till, seeing it on the point of destruction, he compassionately rose, caught it by its wings, in spite of its struggles, and, putting it out into the darkness, closed the window on it. 'You and your Eugénie,' he says, 'will find in this little incident what God has put into it for you.' We long for light, and

[1] This letter, too long for insertion here, should be read in the original, vol. ii. p. 10.

happiness, and love, but God, seeing our dangers from these very things, saves us from them by what seems to be the cruellest of banishments. How sad, how long is the night of separation! But the morning breaks, and we realise all is well on the eternal shore.

We are sometimes puzzled by what sounds, on the surface, like contradictory doctrines in the teaching of our Lord. For instance, He is ever invoking peace on His disciples and promising them the blessings of peace: 'Not as the world giveth you,' He says, 'I give it to you'; and yet in another place He says: 'I come not to bring peace, but the sword.' And again He encourages innocent joy and mirth in His presence, suffering little children to come to Him, and assisting at the family feasts of Bethany and of Cana, and yet it is on the mourner that He invokes a blessing, saying, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'

Peace and innocent joys are ever beautiful in God's sight, but there is an earthly joy, a peace of this world which must give way before the higher, because more supernatural graces, when God sees fit to confer them on man. And this doctrine, which is that of all spiritual writers, helps us to gain further insight into the sayings and doings of our Divine Saviour whilst on earth, and enables us to reach to a deeper comprehension of them.

It is thus with those special calls in which Jesus Christ asks for a specific *sacrifice* on the part of their recipients, such as those, for example, which are known, in the Catholic Church, by the name of vocations. There is one, which may be looked upon as typical of all, recorded in the Gospel of St. Mark.

'And when He was gone forth into the way, a certain man, running up and kneeling before Him, asked Him: Good Master, what shall I do that I may receive life everlasting? And Jesus said to him, Why dost thou call me good? None is good but one, that is God.

'Thou knowest the Commandments: Do not commit

adultery, do not kill, do not steal, bear not false witness, do no fraud, honour thy father and thy mother.

'But he answering said to Him: Master, all these I have observed from my youth.

'And Jesus, looking on him, loved him, and said to him: One thing is wanting unto thee: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me.

'Who, being struck sad at that saying, went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.' (Mark x. 17–22.)

There are several things that call for comment in this passage of the Gospel. In the first place it would appear, on the surface, as if our Lord was unprepared for the desire of this good man for a higher life; and yet we know that every aspiration after perfection—aspirations which are not satisfied with simply keeping the Commandments—must have their origin in Him. But does He not often behave in this way to each one of us? The good Sower sows His seed in our heart, and there leaves it to germinate; and later on, when it has come up and is about to bear fruit and we go to Him with it, He makes as if He knew it not, and we have to press Him as the disciples pressed Him going to Emmaus, and at last He yields to our prayers.

In this case we see how our Saviour, having inspired the man with a desire for perfection, discloses to him what it involves, and the man goes away sorrowing, 'for he had great possessions.' Jesus, looking on him, loved him, we are told. The love of Jesus, then, in this life means great sacrifices. 'Thou art a bloody spouse to me'—the words of Sephora—are words which the saints have applied to Jesus united to the faithful soul.

He loved us, and delivered Himself up for us; and the closer He draws us to Himself, the nearer we are to those pierced Hands and Feet, to that Heart opened by a lance, to that thorn-crowned Head, the deeper will be our sufferings

in this life, the more we shall be called upon to renounce and deny ourselves in following Him.

It has been constantly urged against followers of Christ that the maxims of the Gospel are very little practised by its believers. The doctrine of Jesus Christ, if fully acted up to, should by this time have worked a revolution in the world. Wars, enmities, lawsuits ought long ago to have ceased, the rich should share everything with the poor, the laws of self-denial, fasting and prayer should everywhere be observed—or even, if there were exceptions to the rule, a Christian should be universally recognized by his behaviour, and obedience to the law of Christ. Human nature remains unchanged; this is a fundamental truth. In spite of the coming of Jesus Christ and the graces bestowed by Him, man is ever inclined to sin and to fall away from the law of God, and thus we are perpetually confronted with the fact that many Christians, Catholics included, make no pretence, even, of living up to the practice of their holy religion. But if this is so in the case of individual souls, much as we may lament it, with regard to the standard of perfection as taught by Jesus Christ and practised by His Church, there never is, nor could be, any change or alteration. The maxims which He inculcated, the sanctity which He preached, the divine fire which He came to light in the hearts of men and of which He said, 'What would I but that it should be enkindled'? can never cease to exist, to burn, in His Church.

In every town or village in Catholic countries (and in how many where only a scattered flock meet together in non-Catholic countries!), as a light burning in the sanctuary night and day testifies to the hidden life Jesus lives upon the altar, so wherever there is a church there is a priest, called upon by a sublime vocation to lead what has been called the angelical life—a supernatural life, proving the power God exercises *now*, as He did whilst on earth, of

speaking to the soul of man and saying: 'Come and follow Me.' And wherever there is a convent of religious—women giving up the joys of married life, of maternity, remembering what was said to Mary the sister of Martha: 'But one thing is necessary; Mary has chosen the better part, and it shall not be taken away from her'—there again God testifies to the world that His power is as great now to move the heart of man, and of woman, as it was when Christianity was first founded.

This is a testimony to the power of the Crucified One which the world will never be rid of. It may vilify it, it may misunderstand it. It may even seek to set up another, a base Christianity, such as the muscular Christianity of which so much was made fifty years ago, in its place. But the fashions of these things pass away, and man passes away with them. God alone remains, and, as the Scripture says, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'

ON PRAYER

On two occasions only is it recorded that the Apostles asked spiritual favours of our Lord. One petition was: 'Increase our faith'; the other, 'Lord, teach us to pray.' From this we may infer that after divine faith prayer is—or should be—the most important feature of our lives. The reason of this is obvious. Man was created by God for His love and service, and as God is a Spirit and is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, so our service of Him must be inward, supernatural, proceeding from the heart. It should find its expression indeed in outward acts, but it must be seated in that threefold intelligence made to God's image and likeness, and destined by Him to the greatness of immortality.

Jesus Christ teaches us by His own example, as well as by precept and inculcation, the importance of prayer. He gave thirty years to the practice of interior life, of prayer and recollection, and three only to His public ministry, and for this He prepared Himself, as the Scripture tells us, by a forty days' retreat of prayer and of fasting in the desert. Again, how often are we told that He went out into a mountain to pray, and He passed the whole night in the prayer of God! That He intended His example to be imitated we cannot doubt for a moment, for has He not said, 'Pray without ceasing'; 'We ought always to pray, and not to faint'; 'Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find,

knock and it shall be opened unto you'? besides giving in His own Divine Person innumerable instances of the efficacy of prayer by granting all manner of graces, spiritual and temporal, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, pardoning the sinner—all in answer to prayer, fervent, humble, and persevering.

No sooner had our Lord ascended into heaven than the Apostles proceeded to carry out His heavenly teaching. For it is recorded in the Acts that, 'returning to Jerusalem, all these were persevering with one mind in prayer'; and again we hear of them constantly as 'going into the temple to pray' and 'persevering in the communication of the Bread and in prayer.' And when St. Peter was put into prison 'prayer was made without ceasing to God for him.'

Following in the footsteps of their Divine Master, they not only gave us the example, but they unceasingly advocated the practice of prayer. The epistles of St. Paul and St. James are full of exhortations to prayer, and from this store-house of divine wisdom the Church, in the person of her saints and Doctors, has drawn repeatedly her teachings on prayer and the interior life.

The seeds thus sown by the Apostles fell on fertile soil and brought forth fruit a hundred-fold. In the continual persecutions which followed the propagation of the Christian religion, in which the followers of Christ early experienced the truth of their Master's warning that 'in this world they should have tribulation,' and 'that they should be hated by all men for His sake,' it was in the close union of their souls with God in prayer that they found strength and grace to persevere in their holy resolution, in spite of the torments of their persecutors. It was in order to give themselves up to a life of prayer and mortification that numberless men and women in the second and third centuries of the Christian era, disgusted with the wickedness and impiety of the imperial cities, shook the dust of the

plain off their feet and, taking refuge in the vast solitudes of Syria and Upper Egypt, made them, in the language of the ancient chroniclers, 'to blossom like the rose.' It was there, in these remote solitudes, that the foundations were laid of the great religious Orders who, under the guiding hand of Providence, were destined to do such a vast work in spreading the doctrines of the Christian Church through the nations of the earth, and in subjugating to the peaceful sway of religion and civilization the Northern hordes against whom the power of Rome was to struggle in vain. Very wonderful are the stories which are handed down to us of the lives of these holy men, of their superhuman austerities, their marvellous gifts of prayer and miracles, their union with God. In reading their annals we are almost tempted to exclaim: Surely these were angels, and not men! A question naturally rises to our minds, as we look back across this vista of centuries, as to what kind of prayer was practised by the solitaries and cenobites of the Thebaid. We learn from St. Jerome and others that the cenobites who lived in community under a fixed rule—such as that of St. Pachomius or St. Macarius—assembled at the canonical hours to sing the praises of God. Ejaculatory prayer, the study of Scripture, toil and contemplation filled their day and many hours of the night. The anchorites, separated sometimes by vast distances from their brethren in the lauras, communed with God in solitude; but, like the cenobites, they led a life of prayer, study of the Scriptures, and severe manual labour. Sloth, mental and bodily, we are told, was incompatible with the vocation of a monk of the desert. Rising with the earliest dawn, he began his day of toil—work in the cell at weaving mats out of palm-leaves, or in the field—and whilst his hands moved in his daily labour, his soul was raised to God, and often tasted the ineffable joys of contemplation.

These elect souls, besides, no doubt, fulfilling their

vocation of praising and serving God, of expiating sin and interceding for sinners, were given us as 'our standard,' as Newman tells us, 'of right and good. They are raised up to be monuments and lessons, they remind us of God, they introduce us into the unseen world, they teach us what Christ loves, they track out for us the way which leads heavenward.'[1] It is in this light that we should do well to consider their lives, for can we hesitate in our belief that the example of these holy solitaries, their austerities, their prayer and contemplation—in short, the triumph they exhibited of the supernatural over every human instinct, must have deeply influenced the minds of their contemporaries? That their effect was very great we can hardly doubt when we study the annals of the early centuries of the Church, of which abundant materials have come down to us. St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, Tertullian, and many other writers of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries let us into the secrets of the lives led by the devout followers of Christ in those days. The letters of St. Jerome, especially, are concerned with every detail regarding the lives of his penitents, to whom they were addressed. It cannot be otherwise than a revelation to us, who live in more degenerate days, to find that there was a time when a busy life in the world (as we see in the instance of the Senator Desiderius and others) did not interfere with the practice of asceticism and prayer. We learn also from them how no delicacy of bringing up, or weakness of sex, or even infirmity of age was allowed to hamper the aspirations of those who, though for the most part living in the world, dedicated the chief part of their day to prayer, study, and the service of the poor. But not in Rome only, though, as we know by the judgment of her contemporaries, she was ever 'foremost in the practice and encouragement of every good work,' did the tree of Christian knowledge bear

[1] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, p. 101.

such glorious fruit. It would take far too long, and be quite outside our purpose, to give the barest example of the place prayer has occupied in the lives of holy men of all nations, who, growing up under the shadow of Holy Church, have ever exemplified the truth of our Lord's saying: 'By their fruits you shall know them.' But, before passing to the consideration of what constitutes prayer, let us for a moment dwell on the glories of our own country before the blight of the Reformation spirit passed over it. In no country did the great truths of Christianity take more hold than they did in those of the Celt and Anglo-Saxon. Witness the churches and monasteries which have covered the land, the number of the canonized saints, the devotion to St. Peter, and to the ever Blessed Mother of God, a devotion which earned for this country the title of the Dowry of Mary.

Truly astounding it is to read, in our money-making days, that our Catholic ancestors dedicated a hundred days in the year to the service of God. These days comprised, besides Sundays, the whole octave of Christmas, three days following Pentecost, and the three days after Easter; also five feasts of our Lady, including the feast of our Lady's Conception, which was made of obligation by a Council of the Province of Canterbury in 1287; the feasts of the Apostles, of St. Augustine, and many others.[1] On these days servile work was forbidden, and the laity were under the obligation of assisting at the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Devotion to Mass was a special feature in the religious lives of our countrymen in pre-Reformation times. 'Not only lords who had private chapels, but men and women of all conditions above the labouring classes, were accustomed to hear daily Mass, and that before breakfast, or dinner, as it was then

[1] See the Synod of Exeter, held in the year 1287. Also Wilkins, ii. 145, 175, 111, 252. Bridgett's *History of the H. Eucharist*, ii. 65.

called. Early English literature is full of allusions to this custom. Not only the lord before he goes out hunting, but the merchant before opening his shop, must hear Mass. Even for travellers starting at daybreak Mass was said in chapels on the bridge, as in London. In Morecambe Bay is an island called Chapel Island, because on it once stood a chapel where travellers across the sands at low water stopped to hear Mass.'[1]

If we turn from general statements to particular instances, such as are handed down to us in the Lives of our great men, we find that the biographer of Alfred the Great tells us that that wise and mighty king divided his day as follows:— Eight hours he gave to work and study, eight hours to sleep and recreation (which included meals), and eight to prayer. William the Conqueror, though the record of his life was anything but a spotless one, and an ungovernable temper caused him to commit many brutal and revengeful deeds, never failed in his religious exercises; we are told 'he heard Mass daily and assisted at matins, vespers, and other canonical hours.'[2] His contrite and edifying death was doubtless the reward of that faith which he professed so heartily during his stormy and eventful life.

Walsingham, in his Life of Henry III., tells us: 'Every day he was wont to hear three Masses with music (*cum nota*), and not satisfied with that, was present at many low Masses, and when the priest elevated the Lord's Body he used to support the priest's hand and kiss it.' Similar accounts are given us by the chaplain and biographer of Henry V. of that great hero and king. He tells us, in quaint Latin verse, that he confessed himself weekly:

'Qualibet hebdomada culpas confessio mundat';

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[1] Bridgett, *op. cit.* p. 222.

[2] Matthew Paris, *Hist.* p. 12 (ed. Watts). *Ibid.* ii. 210.

and that he assisted at Mass with the greatest fervour and devotion:

> Externas curas, præsentes sive futuras,
> Tunc non disponit, in Christo spem quia ponit.'[1]

At the funeral oration on the Lady Margaret, mother of Henry VII., preached by Blessed John Fisher, he says of her:

Every day at her uprising, which commonly was not long after five of the clock, she began certain devotions, and so after them, with one of her gentlewomen, the matins of our Lady; which kept her to then she came into her closet where with her chaplain she said matins of the day; and after that daily heard four or five Masses upon her knees, so continuing in her prayers and devotions unto the hour of dinner, which of the eating day was ten of the clock, and upon the fasting day eleven. After dinner full truly she would go her stations to three altars daily; daily her dirges and commendations she would say, and her evensongs before supper, both of the day and of our Lady, besides many other prayers and psalters of David throughout the year.

Of Catherine of Arragon, the saintly wife of Henry VIII., we are told many beautiful traits by her biographer and contemporary, Sander:

Catherine (he says) used to rise at midnight in order to be present at matins sung by religious. At five o'clock she dressed herself, but as quickly as she could, saying that the only time wasted was the time spent in dressing. She was a member of the Third Order of St. Francis and wore the habit thereof under her royal robes. She fasted every Friday and Saturday, and on bread and water on the eve of our Lady's feasts. She went to confession every Wednesday and Friday, and on Sunday received communion. She said the office of our Lady daily, and was present every morning in church for six hours together during the sacred offices. . . . She always prayed on her knees, without a cushion or anything else between them and the pavement.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.* p. 214.

[2] Nicholas Sander, *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*, trans. by D. Lewis, p. 7; Bridgett, ii. 219.

It will be urged, with perfect truth, that the instances given above are taken from the lives of the exceptional few, that the 'reverse of the medal' should be shown—the many, who in those lawless ages gave themselves up to every iniquity, regardless of restraint, moral or legal. Human nature, loosed from the bonds of religion and morality, is the same in all ages, and Christ Himself has warned us to expect the tares to grow up together with the wheat. But this in no way affects our contention. What we urge is that the standard of piety of people *living in the world* and acting up to the teaching of their religion was much higher in those days when the Catholic Faith reigned undisputed throughout Christendom. Men and women lived according to the maxims of the Gospel. They fasted, they gave a large portion of the day to prayer and good works; their views of life were largely influenced by the supernatural—by love of God, and fear of the punishment which awaited them after death. Finally, while taking their share of the work, or toils, or pastimes of life, they had their eyes fixed on another life beyond the grave.

The Reformation claims, or rather its admirers have claimed for it, that it swept away many barriers and emancipated the human intelligence from the swaddling-bands of the Middle Ages.

It is true it threw down many barriers. As an avalanche suddenly loosened from the side of a mountain, descending into a peaceful valley, carries all before it, so did Henry VIII.'s apostasy, his treason to his God, backed as it was by a submissive court and hungry courtiers, and supported by the arm of the law, by confiscation, robbery, and imprisonment, break into the peaceful fold of the Church in England and sweep all before it.

Then were the words of the Prophet fulfilled: 'My people hath been a lost flock, their shepherds have caused them to go astray, and have made them wander in the mountains:

they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting-place. Proudly (they) entered the sanctuary and took away the golden altar and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof. They have changed my delightful portion into a desolate wilderness. They have shut up the doors that were in the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burnt incense nor offered holocausts in the sanctuary of the God of Israel.'[1]

Those days are over, we may trust, for ever; no longer are the practices of our holy religion proscribed. The penal laws and disabilities are done away with. We can hear Mass without fear of fine and imprisonment. It is therefore not unnatural at the close of the nineteenth century, which has brought us many and beneficent changes, that we should pause and take a comprehensive view of the situation, comparing our past with our present and our prospects for the future. In this spirit we may ask: Is it with no misgiving of present shortcoming that we look back on the lives of our Catholic ancestors in the Ages of Faith?

The Catholic Church is ever the same. Unchangeable and unchanged, she returns in her old majesty to the land which disowned her and cast her out, bearing the same message of peace and good-will to all men; bringing with her the Sacraments of love and reconciliation, setting up the same Saviour to be adored in His Eucharistic Presence on her altars.

But we, the children of saints—for have we not an even stronger claim to that title than the Jews had of old?—do we show the same love and devotion to her ministrations as did our forefathers in days gone by? Many flock to us; do we give them the example of fervour and piety, such as they have a right to expect from us, judging us by the standard of our professions and of our belief? And if we dare not ask this question of Catholics born and bred, is

[1] Jer. l. 6; 1 Mac. i. 23; 2 Paralip. xxix. 6, 7.

it far otherwise with those who have sought entrance into the Fold? Do we see in all of them—in many we may gratefully thank God we do—but in all do we see a perception of the enormous value of the gift they have received, that priceless pearl, divine faith? And is this consciousness in every case accompanied with a corresponding change of life?

We live in unsupernatural days; not in times of gross immorality as in the days when Rome held her imperial sway over the nations, but in an age of indifference and of religious supineness. The world is so civilised, so full of new inventions, of schemes—scientific, political, philanthropic—of all kinds, that it would almost appear as if it thought it could do without God, as if He was unnecessary in His own creation. Emerson describes 'The Times' as making polite bows to the Almighty; and this is hardly a sarcasm, it is simply a commentary.

Again, the marked distinction between good and bad no longer exists. We all aim at a respectable appearance. It is the homage modern civilisation pays to Christianity, and bears the same resemblance to virtue as going to church on Sunday because it is the proper thing to do so does to the enraptured worship of a St. Elizabeth or a St. Francis. And still God's commands are not changed! How are we to bridge over these discrepancies, and serve Him as we should in an age which ignores Him?

We are told we cannot put back the clock, or return to the ways of our ancestors. Competition is too keen, the race for wealth too arduous, for us to live as they did, and to drop out of the race is to be left behind.

To a certain extent this is true; but the service of God and the practice of prayer are always possible, nay *easy*, to those who are in earnest. If we cannot spend eight hours a day in prayer as the great Alfred did, we can make our lives prayerful ones, even as he did. With this object spiritual writers have offered the following suggestions:

Every morning we wake up to a new day; let us, as it were, take possession of it with our first waking consciousness and lay it at the feet of God. If we are early risers, that is so much time gained for the service of God, and, as the Psalmist tells us, those moments are specially pleasing to Him. 'In the morning I sought Thee and found Thee'; and again: '*In matutinis meditabor in te; quia fuisti adjutor meus.*'

If we can, above all, let us assist devoutly at Mass. We believe that no action we can perform in the day is comparable in value to being present at the Holy Sacrifice. Should we not blush for our indifference to the loss we sustain by staying away from Mass when the fervour of our Catholic forefathers was such as to draw down the ridicule of Cranmer, who, speaking of the traditional observance of his countrymen, says: 'They run from altar to altar and from sacring to sacring, as they call it . . . . gazing at the thing which the priest held up in his hands . . . . and saying, "This day I have seen my Maker, and I cannot be quiet except I see my Maker once a day"?'

Three times daily we sit down to meals; if twice at the beginning and end we lift up our hearts to God in love and praise and thanksgiving, this will be another means of recalling our wandering thoughts to Him. And again we should pray at night before we go to rest. If a network of prayer and praise surrounds and safeguards our days, even though each strand be but a slender one, we shall find it has fastened us securely to the Throne of God.

'Besides this there is a certain gravitation of the mind to God in a prayerful way, which comes from love and the practice of the divine Presence, and which ranges from intercession to thanksgiving, and from thanksgiving to praise, and from praise to petition, according as the moods of our mind change, and with hardly any trouble or any conscious process.'[1]

[1] *Growth in Holiness*, p. 243.

Above all should we expect and look to the sweet influence of prayer on the trials of our daily life. He who can lift up his heart to God when trouble or misfortune comes upon him, not when other consolations have failed him, but as a happy instinct born of filial love, has gone far in the interior life. He who can say 'Thank God!' when he hears bad news or meets with a sharp blow of pain, mental or physical, has gone farther. For the saints tell us that a *Deo gratias* said in affliction is worth a hundred we say when things go well with us. But if we are led to think that the practice of prayer is one of unalloyed sweetness, we shall be greatly mistaken. In betaking ourselves to pray we must remember we are rendering God our homage and service; it does not necessarily mean that He is going to reward us on the spot with pleasing emotions and sensible devotion. The time of prayer, ascetical writers will tell us, is God's time for punishment. It is then that we shall be made to suffer, in the loss of His sensible presence and in our dryness, for those little sins which we pass over so lightly: sins against charity, of self-indulgence, of idle words, and such like. But whether it is in punishment of past infidelities, or as a trial which God sees fit to send us for our greater good, a dry prayer or meditation is, we are told, ever the most fruitful, as long as we persevere, possessing our souls in patience, till He turns to us again in His own good time. St. Francis of Sales, who has been called the saint of pure love, bids us beware especially in prayer of making too much intellectual effort: 'Remember,' he says, 'that the graces of prayer are not earthly but heavenly waters, which all our efforts cannot acquire, but for which we must dispose ourselves with humble and tranquil care. We must hold up our heart open to heaven, and await the sacred dew. We approach God, then, for two principal reasons. The first is to render to God the honour and homage which we owe to Him, and this can be done without His speaking to us, or our

speaking to Him—acknowledging by our presence that He is our God and we His vile creatures, and remaining prostrate in spirit before Him, awaiting His commands.

'The second reason for which we come before God is to speak to Him, and to hear Him speak to us by His inspirations, and interior motions. . . . One of these reasons may sometimes fail us, but both never. If we can speak to our Lord let us speak to Him, praise Him, beseech Him, listen to Him; if we cannot because we are hoarse, let us remain in His chamber, and pay Him reverence. He will observe us there, regard our patience, and be pleased by our silence. Another time we shall be amazed when He takes us by the hand, and shows us everything, making a hundred turns along the beautiful walks of the garden of prayer.'

The field of prayer is a vast one; and any attempt to compress into a short space a subject which saints have devoted their lifetime to elucidating would be time wasted. A few words of explanation to beginners, however, may be useful. Aspirants to an interior life who feel themselves attracted by the Holy Spirit to a life of prayer may be roughly divided into two classes. The first are those who, having mastered the difficulties of meditation, whether on the Ignatian or Sulpician plan, find in those holy and time-honoured methods all the help and sustenance their souls require. To these we have no words to say; they will find in the works of Rodriguez, of Lallemant, of Baker, and of innumerable other spiritual writers, a storehouse of spiritual wealth suited to all their needs. There remains another class of souls, more numerous, we need hardly hesitate to say, than the first, who, though sincerely desirous of responding to our Lord's invitation, and feeling in their souls a great drawing to prayer, have neither time nor inclination, nor possibly power to grapple with the intricacies of formal meditation or mental prayer, and in fine can make nothing of it.

St. Teresa, to whom the Church has given the title of the Doctor of Prayer, has left in her writings to the communities which were under her guidance such solid and practical directions to souls labouring under this difficulty that we cannot do better than take her for our guide.

The first thing that strikes us in studying St. Teresa's words about prayer is their largeness of ideas. She will have no limits placed or restrictions made as regards prayer. Everyone, she tells us, is called to pray, but not all are called to pray alike. Therefore those who find difficulty in meditation, and cannot fix their mind on mental prayer, are not to despond or to give up the practice of prayer on that account. Though everyone cannot meditate formally, all can pray vocally, fixing their attention on the words they are using, and by their means and a pure intention of pleasing God they may, as St. Teresa assures us, reach even great heights of contemplation. In addition to vocal prayer she recommends the use of a pious book on the great truths of religion, to prevent the mind from wandering while at prayer, and to serve to suggest acts of love of God, of gratitude for His favour, and so forth.

'It is indeed a different road,' she tells us, 'but it leads to the same goal; and they must persuade themselves that it is by this road God wishes them to travel, since they find the other closed against them. What matters it by which of these two roads we travel, provided we succeed in quenching our thirst at that fountain of living water which so refreshes our spirit? It is a great consolation to know that God wishes all of us to drink of it, and our great anxiety ought to be to seek it in the manner in which He wishes it to be sought for by us. . . . Observe that our Lord invites *all*; and since He is truth itself there is no longer room for doubt on this point. If this banquet were not open to *all* the Lord would not summon all to it, and even though He did He would not

say: "I will give you to drink." He might have said, "Come to Me, all of you, for at least you will lose nothing thereby, and I will give to drink to whomsoever it may please Me." But since He has issued His invitation to all without adding this limitation, I regard it as certain that this living water will not be wanting to anyone who does not loiter by the way. May our Lord, who has promised it, give us, in His mercy, grace to seek it as it ought to be sought.'[1] We should be greatly mistaken, however, if we thought St. Teresa restricted her recommendations to the devout recital of vocal prayers: these are but the early beginnings; but, as she ceases not to assure us, even these may be made very pleasing to our Divine Lord if accompanied by an earnest intention of doing Him service. 'Yes, provided He but sees in us the first commencements of a good disposition, by which we begin to desire to approach Him by prayer, He accepts everything—even a glance, even a sigh—and instead of attending to the immensity of our obligations to Him, it would seem that He heeds only His own immense love towards us.' She therefore goes on to adjure the soul who has resolved on entering on this holy road to go forward with great fervour and diligence, because in so doing she will have faced half the difficulty. Still she has a word of consolation for the timid and faltering; to them she says: 'No matter how great the tepidity which may accompany prayer, it is still much esteemed by God. And do you, my sisters, take care not to value lightly this first grace (of praying even with tepidity), and be not cast down when you perceive that you do not all at once yield yourselves up entirely to the Lord; for His Divine Majesty well knows how to wait many days and years, especially when He sees perseverance and good desires on your part.'[2] From this stepping-stone of good-will St. Teresa goes on to

[1] St. Teresa's *Pater Noster*, by Frassinetti, p. 37.

[2] *Ibid. The Mansions*, ii. p. 65.

invite the soul to go up higher, and consider our Lord as present when she converses with Him in prayer, turning His Divine countenance, full of love and compassion, ready to hear all she has to say to Him.

'If you accustom yourselves to have Him near you, and He sees that you do it with affection, and that you constantly aim at giving Him pleasure, you cannot, as the saying is, get rid of Him. He will never be absent from you; He will help you, and you will find Him with you in all places. Do you consider it a small matter to have such a friend as this ever at your side? O my sisters, let those amongst you who cannot pray much with the understanding, nor keep your thoughts fixed without distractions, accustom yourselves to this. Remember I know that you *can* do it; for I have myself passed many years under this cross of not being able to fix my thoughts quietly upon one thing. And truly it is a very great affliction; but I know that our Lord does not abandon us so entirely that, if we approach Him with humility and ask the favour of Him, He will refuse to accompany us. And even though we should not succeed in obtaining this favour in a year, we shall obtain it in several years, and let us not grudge to spend time on a matter in which our time will be so well employed. Who is there to hurry us in this affair? I say that we may accustom ourselves to this and labour to get near this true Master.'[1]

We must not expect to acquire this great grace of a sense of our Lord's Divine presence in prayer in a short space of time. We should seek it, as St. Teresa urges us to do, with great humility and perseverance. At the same time it must be without violent efforts of the imagination, which would be rather injurious to the object we have in view. She asks of us merely 'a little attention of a natural, quiet kind,' by means of which we would turn the eyes of the soul towards her Divine Master even for a brief while. Nor must we be

[1] *Ibid.* p 58.

discouraged if we have difficulty at first, because so unnatural is this exercise of the interior life to the unspiritual man that at first the soul, as it were, revolts against it. It is with justice, then, that St. Teresa compares the soul of man in this sad strait to a bride who has been long separated from her husband, and who, when she desires to return once more to him, 'has to labour to win back his lost love, and to acquire a love for his home, which is hers also.'[1] To do this she recommends us most earnestly to study the countenance of our Divine Lord, who is in truth the Spouse of our souls, and to meditate as devoutly as we are capable of doing on all that the Evangelists tell us of the life He led whilst He was upon earth. Whatever our frame of mind, she tells us, 'when we turn the eyes of our soul upon Him, we shall find Him such as we desire to find Him—joyful if if we are in a joyous mood, sad if we are sad.' If we are undergoing trials, mental or physical, we are to contemplate our Divine Saviour in the Garden of Gethsemane, weighed down by the sins of mankind, or suffering cruel torments from His scourging at the pillar, or crowned with thorns, or finally enduring His three hours' agony on the Cross and dying on it. Again, should our souls be cast down by the knowledge of our miseries, our past sins, our frequent lapses from the paths of virtue, let us seek comfort from the contemplation of our Lord's mercy and compassion to sinners, let us look at Him receiving the penitent Magdalen, permitting her to kneel at His feet, washing them with her tears and drying them with the hairs of her head, and finally telling her to go in peace, that her sins were forgiven her.

We are told that God is present in the soul in three different ways. The first is common to all mankind. To this St. Paul alludes when he says, 'In Him we live, and move, and are.' (Acts xvii. 28.)

The second is the presence of God in the soul by sanctifying grace, which it loses by mortal sin. Of this our Lord

[1] *Ibid.* p. 70.

says: 'If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and will make our abode in him.' (John xiv. 13.)

The third is that intimate, interior presence which God vouchsafes to His saints, and to those who have given themselves up to His love and service. Of this kind David says: 'How great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee! . . . Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy Face from the disturbance of men.' (Ps. xxx. 21.)

It is to cause us to aspire to this intimate presence of God in our hearts that all St. Teresa's instructions tend. And with this object she entreats us not to look for Him in the heavens above us, or as One far removed from us, but on the contrary as being very near us: in fine, seated in our own heart.

St. John of the Cross, writing in his 'Spiritual Canticle,' enlarges on the same theme. 'O thou soul,' he says, 'most beautiful of all creatures, who longest so earnestly to know the place where thy Beloved tarries, that thou mayest seek Him and be united to Him! Behold, He tells thee that *thou art thyself the secret chamber in which He dwells*, the retreat in which He is hidden. In truth it is for thee a matter of great consolation and joy to see that thy sole good and hope is so near thee. . . . Rejoice, then, with Him and be glad with interior recollection, seeing thou hast Him so near. Here love Him, here desire Him, and do not go out of thyself to seek Him.'[1]

To enable us to realise this presence of God in our souls St. Teresa wishes us to represent to ourselves that we have within us a palace of noble dimensions and lofty height, for faith teaches us that it was made after the likeness of God Himself. But this palace which God has made so beautiful, and which He has adorned in baptism with every gift, is it not oftentimes disfigured with many objects displeasing to

[1] *Ibid.* p. 83.

Him; does He not see much there which, if we could, we would gladly hide from His sight? Therefore let us seek—before we can expect Him to take up His royal abode there—to cleanse it by heartfelt contrition, the contrition of the Psalmist, who asks God to 'wash us yet more from our iniquity,' and to adorn it with virtues pleasing to Him, and specially with great humility and purity of heart.

Again she would have us picture our soul to ourselves as a most delightful garden, a comparison which the Holy Spirit uses in the Canticle of Canticles when He says: 'My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed.' This loving Spouse of our souls would have it enclosed so that He alone (who has vouchsafed to call Himself a jealous God) should have access there. And when He has entered into this garden and taken possession of it, He will cause fountains of water to spring up in it, which will flow from His most sacred wounds. And though He may at times cause the north wind of aridity to blow over this garden, or, like a careful gardener who prunes a too luxuriant growth, may cut off and destroy (thereby causing much pain) all that is displeasing to Him therein, still His divine promise made to His prophet shall never fail: 'For a small moment I have forsaken thee, but with great mercy I will gather thee; in a moment of indignation I hid my face a little while from thee, but with everlasting kindness have I had mercy on thee, said the Lord thy Saviour.' (Is. liv. 7, 8.)

This idea of a garden as a type of the human soul was a favourite one with St. Teresa, and she thus speaks of it in the 14th chapter of her Life:

'Often in the beginning . . . . it was a source of great pleasure to me to consider that my soul was a garden, and that the Lord used to delight to walk therein. I used to beg of Him that He would deign to increase the perfume of the little flowers of virtue that were beginning to show signs of budding forth, and that He might preserve them for His

own glory. And as I wished for nothing for myself, I besought Him to pluck and gather those which pleased Him, since I well knew that this would only make them bloom all the better afterwards.' [1]

In conclusion, let us remember that this prayer of recollection (as St. Teresa calls it), though by means of it many holy souls have reached great heights of sanctity, may also be used with profit by the humblest beginner in the same holy way. As this great saint never ceases to remind us, it only requires at the outset a little attention of the simplest kind to the words we are using and to Him to Whom they are addressed —attention without which prayer is almost a mockery; and in the second place a firm will and determination to respond to the graces God is prepared to give us by means of prayer. In prayer God does all, but His Divine Majesty expects of us that we should co-operate with Him in removing those obstacles He sees in us to the reception of His divine grace.

That none are excluded from this Fountain of living waters the following anecdote, which we are told is a true one, will illustrate.

There lived in a village in an out-of-the-way part of Spain a cripple who was also an orphan, having lost both his parents in early life. Partly because infirmity of any kind is not attractive, also because he did not exhibit much intelligence, he grew up almost without education. Without friends or education his life was a lonely one, but the Church with its open doors was ever ready to receive him, and his wants being few, and those provided for him by charity, it became ever more, year by year, his home. One day a newcomer in the village, seeing the poor cripple, who was looked upon as little better than a fool by his neighbours, absorbed before the Tabernacle in prayer, asked him what he could find to occupy his thoughts for hours together.

His answer was: 'I look at God, and He looks at me.'

This is prayer.

[1] *Ibid.* p. 211.

ON VOCAL PRAYER

By vocal prayer we mean the homage we give to God with our lips, in prayers composed either by ourselves or others. Praise, love, and thanksgiving are thoughts which rise in the heart and have their source there; but in the prayers to which we are referring they are expressed in a set form of words, and so directed to the service of God. In the psalms and other inspired writings we have a model of all prayer; accordingly the Church is ever putting them before us in her liturgy and Divine Office. As much of our service of God and intercourse with Him—to which we give the name of prayer—takes this form, it might be as well to consider the means we have of making it useful and profitable to our souls.

The first question which naturally suggests itself to us is, how much and what kind of vocal prayer should we undertake to say every day? This is a point on which authorities are practically agreed, so we cannot do better than follow the general opinion.

In the first place, they are unanimous in advising us not to attempt too much at first. Too much, it is true, is a relative term; what might be a great deal for one with little leisure at his command would be next to nothing to another whose day is at his own disposal. Still we are to take this as a warning that we are not to burthen ourselves too heavily with a number of vocal prayers. Whilst the fervour of a

conversion, or first turning to God, is upon us, we shall not feel the strain; but later on, when trials of aridity or despondency come upon us, we may find them more than we can bear, and to drop them *then* would be a fatal shock to our interior life, and one from which it might take us years to recover.

Not only do we run this risk, but, as Faber tells us, the spirit of devotion is sometimes smothered beneath a burthen of vocal prayer. We must therefore discriminate, in the immense riches the Church places at our disposal, between those which are suited to our special wants and opportunities and others which, though equally good, we feel to be beyond us. Undoubtedly the recital of the Divine Office, if not daily, at least on the great feasts of the Church, is the devotion which stands at the head of all others. It has merits to which no other kind of private devotion can lay claim. It seems almost incredible that so few should aspire to the privilege of saying it daily, when we consider (1) the prayers it is composed of, (2) the company in which it is said.

In the Breviary is contained, as we well know, a compendium of the whole life of our Divine Lord, as related in the Gospels; that of His Blessed Mother, and of the Apostles, martyrs, and confessors. Saints whose genius has been as resplendent as their holiness, such as St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas, have contributed to its pages; finally, the praise of God is daily sung in words inspired by the Holy Ghost—the psalms of David the prophet-king, of Jeremias, of Isaias, and of Solomon.

If words fail us to praise the contents of this holy book what shall we say of the company to which we associate ourselves in the devout recital of it?

To this we can only answer in the words of Holy Writ: 'You are come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many

thousands of angels, and to the Church of the first-born, who are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the New Testament.' (Heb. xii. 22, 24.)

The Church militant on earth is one with the Church triumphant in heaven; accordingly we all, however unworthy, as long as we are in a state of grace, and therefore living members of it, can claim the right, whilst reciting the Divine Office, of joining our voices to the chorus of love, praise, and thanksgiving which is ever ascending like incense before the throne of God and the Lamb.

That prayer, when humble and sincere, is profitable to all we may agree in believing, but that not *all* prayer is equally profitable we know from the words of the Apostle: 'The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself asketh for us . . . and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what the Spirit desireth; because He asketh for the Saints according to God.' (Rom. vii. 26, 27.)

If it is a great matter, then, that our prayer and petition should be guided by the Holy Ghost, where shall we find the same certainty that we are in the right path as we do in joining in the liturgical prayers of Holy Church, which, as we know, is one Body with Him? If we examine attentively this holy volume, we shall see how the Holy Spirit has fitted it to the wants of all mankind.

The first duty we owe to God is praise. We were created for no other end. God could have no other object in creating angels or men than to receive this tribute from them which every intelligent being is bound to offer to his Creator.

In the psalms of David we use words inspired by the Holy Ghost Himself, by means of which we give praise, as perfect as it is possible for us to do as long as we live on earth, to our merciful Saviour.

But man is mortal, he has sinned, and however sincerely

he repents he is liable again to fall into sin, so from the heights of praise and thanksgiving we return—in the pages of the Breviary—to the words of the Royal Penitent acknowledging his misery and his sins, and like him we pour out our sighs and tears before God and implore His forgiveness. Our faith is animated by the ever-recurring cycle of the history of our Divine Master's life upon earth. As one season succeeds another we worship in turn His birth, death, and resurrection, His ascension into heaven, and His sending down the Holy Ghost on the infant Church. Then we contemplate in turn the sorrows and joys of His Blessed Mother, the sufferings and constancy of the confessors, the glorious death of the martyrs.

If we look for motives for holy hope, where shall we find them more clearly established than in the prophecies concerning the redemption of man, made in the Old Law and confirmed in the New? Or if we wish to warm our cold hearts—so ready to cleave to the earthly, so little disposed to the supernatural—by the fires of divine love, where can we better do so than by joining day by day with the saints and martyrs, whose feasts the Church celebrates, learning from their example and their glowing words what our service of God should be? Need we be astonished, therefore, that with some the Divine Office has become the paramount devotion of their lives, and that they have, in fact, formed their spiritual life upon it? When this is so, we may be sure that it is a deep and a solid one.

An attraction to the Divine Office is one, likewise, that Catholics newly received into the Church would do well to cultivate. Nothing will bring home to them more the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, a doctrine which to Catholics is no dead letter; on the contrary, a living reality, and one on which all their prayers and devotions are founded. This is the hall-mark of Catholicism, and the more it is stamped on every word, and work, and prayer of ours,

so that in all we do we join with the saints our fellow-workers, and Jesus Christ, our Head, the less unworthy will our service be, and the more pleasing to Him to whom it is offered.

Not all, however, have time to give to the recital of the Divine Office; to these the Office of our Lady may prove a useful substitute. It is much shorter, taking less than half the time to say; it is divided into seven canonical hours like the Divine Office, and shares in many of its merits and attractions. After the liturgical prayers of the Church there is no other which can compare for devotion, and for its universality, being suitable to the needs of all, with the Rosary.

In the first place, it is the most ancient of any popular prayer. In some form or other, though not in the precise form in which we know it now, it was recited as early as the ninth century,[1] but it did not reach the popularity it attained later till the end of the fifteenth century. Tradition has always connected it with the name of the great St. Dominic, who is said to have propagated this devotion by direct revelation from our Lady in his crusade against the Albigenses.

The advantages to be gained by saying the Rosary are so great and striking that it seems almost sufficient to mention them to ensure their being appreciated.

In the first place, in saying the 'Hail, Mary,' we give the Mother of God the greatest honour we are capable of, as when we salute her as 'full of grace,' we are using the words God put into the mouth of the Angel Gabriel when he announced to her the mystery of the Incarnation, which raised her to a height such as never before has been reached by a child of Adam. Every time we address her in those words—as we cannot believe she would be less courteous to

[1] The Rev. H. Thurston, S.J., has conclusively proved that the Rosary of 150 Hail Marys and 15 Paternosters was unknown till the middle of the fifteenth century.

her clients than would be an earthly queen—she, in return for our salutation, meekly inclines her merciful eyes towards us to listen to our petitions.

Again, in those words, 'The Lord is with thee,' we are not only making an act of faith in the Incarnation, but we are recognising the place Mary holds in the economy of the New Law as dispenser of the favours and gifts of her Son, or, as St. Bernard calls her, the channel by which God confers grace on man. And, thirdly, in praising her holy name we are obeying the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaking first through Elizabeth, and then by the mouth of Mary, who bids us take note—and in this the whole Church of God has manifested the truth of her inspired words—that to all generations she shall be called blessed.

In the first part of the 'Hail, Mary,' we use the words of the Angel Gabriel and of St. Elizabeth. In the second part, which is as it were an amplification of the first and composed by the Church, we address her by the august title conferred on her by the Œcumenical Council of Ephesus, 'Mother of God,' 'Theotocos'; and in virtue of this tremendous dignity, the greatest a human being has ever been made capable of receiving, we place our lives under her protection by begging her to intercede for us now and at the hour of our death.

'The only two moments on which any human being can reckon,'[1] it has been wisely said. Now, when we can still work for eternity, when we can still merit, and 'redeem the time'; and again, the last dread moment on which our eternity will depend.

Wisely does our mother the Church provide for the interests of her children in this petition, not only in asking for the intercession of the most powerful Virgin, but in putting these words in our mouths, as she does in the Rosary, not only daily but many times a day, so that we may as often be reminded of the tremendous issues concerned in the passing

[1] *Memoir of Mother Francis Raphael*, p. 321.

of this moment, and again at the day of our death. The merits of the wording of the 'Hail, Mary,' which we use in saying the Rosary are not its only, or its greatest recommendation.

Every decade begins with the prayer taught us by our Blessed Lord, the model of all prayer, the 'Our Father,' and ends with the 'Glory be to the Father,' &c., thus summing up each chaplet of praise of the greatest of God's works—the Virgin-Mother—and laying it at the feet of the most Blessed Trinity.

We have considered the Rosary first from the point of view of vocal prayer; let us now consider it as uniting, by the contemplation of the mysteries of our Blessed Lord's life to which each decade is dedicated, the merits of both vocal and mental prayer. As we know, the whole Rosary, consisting of fifteen decades, is divided into fifteen mysteries, five joyful, five sorrowful, and five glorious, in which in turn we contemplate the birth and early life of our Saviour, His sufferings and death on the Cross, and finally His glorious Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, the Assumption of His Blessed Mother, and her Coronation in Heaven.

A short explanation of each decade may help us to meditate with profit on these holy mysteries. It is well to remember that there is no better method of stopping wandering thoughts, to which human nature is ever prone, than in fixing the eyes of the soul on some familiar picture appropriate to the mystery which we have under consideration. For instance, if we are contemplating the birth of our Saviour, with little effort of imagination we can see Him in our mind's eye (as the Scripture tells us) dressed in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger, with Mary and Joseph kneeling in adoration before Him; and so on through all the other mysteries of the Rosary.

The Five Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation

Let us picture to ourselves Mary, kneeling at prayer in the house of Joseph, to whom she is espoused, a maiden of fifteen years of age. The Angel greets her as 'full of grace.' We should let our thoughts dwell specially on those words through this decade. 'Hail, Mary'—let us say with Gabriel —'full of grace, even the spotless angel coming straight from the Presence found thee full of grace.' And again let us inwardly thank her for consenting to become the Mother of God.

The Visitation

Let us represent to ourselves Mary going in haste into the city of Juda to visit her cousin St. Elizabeth. We should thus acquit ourselves of our works of charity, especially when by so doing we can spread the "good tidings of great joy." Let us unite with Elizabeth, remembering how she was 'filled with the Holy Ghost,' and say most fervently during this decade, 'Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.'

The Birth of our Saviour

Let us contemplate Jesus, a little babe swaddled and lying in the manger because 'there was no room for Him in the inn.' Mary and Joseph are on each side of Him; the Shepherds adoring Him, and the wise men from the East bringing Him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, by which charity, prayer, and penance are signified. Let us resolve to bring Him these gifts with loving hearts, and let us unite also with the shepherds, who 'returned glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen.'

The Presentation of our Lord in the Temple

Let us unite with Mary in spirit when she presented the

infant Jesus in the Temple, remembering that for the first time since the beginning of the world a creature was enabled to present God with an offering worthy of Himself. The Mother of God presents to the Eternal Father His well-beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased. Let us thank God with Simeon because our eyes, like his, 'have seen Thy salvation . . . a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.'

The Finding of our Lord in the Temple

Let us contemplate, in this holy mystery, Mary and Joseph going up to Jerusalem to fulfil their duty and service to God at the holy Temple, and on their return discovering the loss of their Divine Son; 'and they returned into Jerusalem seeking Him; . . . and after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors hearing them and asking them questions.' Let us ask Mary in this mystery to give us a great desire to possess Jesus, and to go on evermore seeking Him till we find Him, as we shall ever do, and as she and Joseph did, in the Temple where He abides for love of us.

The Five Sorrowful Mysteries

The Sorrowful Agony of our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane

Let us picture to ourselves our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ 'going forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron' . . . and beginning 'to grow sorrowful and to be sad; then saying to them: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death; stay you here and watch with Me." And going a little further He fell upon His face, praying, and saying: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." . . . And being in an agony He prayed the longer, and His sweat became as drops of

blood trickling down to the ground.' Let us compassionate our beloved Saviour suffering these mental tortures on account of our sins ; let us profoundly venerate His perfect resignation to His Father's will, and ask of Him grace to imitate it in our sufferings and trials.

The Scourging at the Pillar

Let us contemplate our Divine Lord in this mystery bound to a pillar, beaten by scourges, deserted by His Apostles and disciples, exposed to the derision of the same multitude who a few days before were crying ' Hosanna to the Son of David.' Let us unite with His Blessed Mother and the angels in adoring His most precious Blood, so freely poured out for our salvation, and beg of Him to have mercy on us and all poor sinners.

The Crowning with Thorns

Let us represent to ourselves Jesus crowned with most cruel thorns, with a mock-sceptre of a reed in his hand whilst the cruel soldiers jeer at Him and hail Him King of the Jews. ' And Jesus was silent ' ; and Pilate, leading Him out for the multitude to see Him, said : ' Behold the man ! ' Let us unite ourselves with the Blessed Virgin Mother of God in adoring her beloved Son, and with her make reparation to Him for the insults and ingratitude of mankind and our own manifold sins. With this intention let us say with great devotion, ' Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.'

The Carriage of His Cross

Let us contemplate Jesus ' carrying His own cross ' to Calvary. He is bowed down under its weight, and falls heavily three times. He meets His Blessed Mother and the other holy women, who are faithful to Him when all have deserted Him. Let us compassionate with our beloved Redeemer, as they did, uniting ourselves with Mary His Mother and with the penitent Magdalen, and implore from

Him the grace of carrying our crosses patiently and lovingly in union with Him.

The Crucifixion

Let us put ourselves in spirit at the foot of the Cross and behold Jesus dying on it between two thieves. Let us listen to His last words: 'Father, forgive them,' He says, 'they know not what they do'; and to the good thief who has made his confession of faith: 'This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.' He confides His Mother to His beloved disciple, and then, stripped of all, abandoned by His Heavenly Father, He cries out with a loud voice, 'All is consummated,' and gives up the ghost. Let us kneel with Mary at the foot of the Cross, and kiss His sacred wounds in spirit, and ask of Him a great sorrow for our sins which have been the cause of His passion and death.

THE FIVE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

The Resurrection

Behold the stone of the sepulchre rolled away and Jesus rising from the dead, immortal and impassible. Let us unite with Mary, His most Blessed Mother, in rejoicing over His victory over death and hell, and say with Holy Church, 'This is the day the Lord has made; come, let us exult and rejoice therein. Alleluia, Alleluia. Christ Himself has become our paschal sacrifice. Alleluia.'

The Ascension of our Lord into Heaven

Let us follow in spirit Jesus with His Blessed Mother and the Apostles and Disciples to the top of Mount Olivet, where, having spoken His last words to them, He takes leave of them, 'and a cloud received Him out of their sight,' and the disciples, 'adoring, went back to Jerusalem with great joy.' Let us also rejoice with our beloved Lord and Saviour that His toils and sufferings for us sinners are over, and let us ask of Him the grace of keeping our eyes ever fixed on

our eternal country, so that we may never be led away by sin, to forget Him or the joy that awaits us in our eternal home.

The Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles

Let us represent to ourselves 'an upper room,' where all the disciples and 'Mary the Mother of Jesus . . . were persevering with one mind in prayer,' and how when the time had come 'there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting; and there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.' Let us invite the Holy Ghost to take possession of our souls by grace, and let us resolve to cultivate a very tender devotion to Mary, as the Holy Spirit willingly takes up His abode in a soul devout to the Mother of God.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven

Let us think of Mary in the words of the antiphon of her feast: 'Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, beautiful like the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array?' Her birth was the morning of a new day for God's children—the dark night of Judaism for ever past. She shines with the reflected glory of her Son, and is for ever sharing and mingling in the rays that come from the Sun of Justice.

The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin in Heaven

Let us represent to ourselves our Blessed Mother as the Apocalypse speaks of her, as 'a great sign which has appeared in heaven: a Woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.' Behold (let us say), O my soul, the reward Jesus has treasured up for His Mother. For her humility He has prepared a seat on the highest throne in heaven; for her purity, a crown of stars; for her afflictions and her heart

pierced with seven swords of sorrow, the endless joys of eternity. Rejoice, then, in the glory and happiness of the Mother of God, who is thy mother also; and ask of her so to dispose of thy life, whether in sorrow, or in joy, that thou mayest share with her the joy of God's presence in a happy eternity. Amen.

It is said that the Blessed Virgin revealed to Blessed Allan that her psalter 'would renew the world in ruins.'[1]

Are we not justified in considering this prophecy in part fulfilled in the present time, when infidelity, and even open hostility to the maxims of the Gospel, are so common throughout the world? And when in response to the Holy Father's yearly invitation this devotion is spreading far and wide, not in one country or one nationality but in every nation of the earth? If we do not as yet see any great visible results, we may believe that, like all solid and lasting work, it is being done silently and slowly, unnoticed by men, but blessed by God and visible to Him. Leo XIII. recommended this propaganda in his Encyclical of 1893, as supplying a remedy for the three crying evils of the time we live in: its growing contempt for a poor and laborious life, its dread of suffering, and its forgetfulness of the world to come. It is to stem this torrent—which has set so strongly in the direction of a revolt against the natural condition of the lives of the great bulk of mankind, of poverty which necessitates labour, and of a materialism which, seeing nothing beyond this life, is blind to the purifying and sanctifying effect of suffering endured patiently with a view to eternity—that the example of our Divine Saviour and His Blessed Mother is put before us in the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary.

[1] *Memoir of Mother Francis Raphael*, p. 323. The Rosary was anciently called the Psalter of Mary, being composed of a hundred and fifty prayers corresponding to the same number of psalms in the Bible.

Wherein shall we find stronger incentive to a devout life than is given us by the contemplation of the mysteries of the Rosary?

Every morning before we go forth to the day's work we should put before us in the five joyful mysteries the example of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in their daily life at Nazareth; a life which, like ours, was made up of a daily round of labour and duties, varied by natural and supernatural joys and trials, viewed wholly in a supernatural light.

Then, lest we should forget that suffering in some form or other is the lot here below of every child of Adam, the recital of the five sorrowful mysteries of our Saviour's Passion may fitly terminate a day spent in His service. And at night before our eyes close in sleep—that dark curtain which represents to us a miniature death—the contemplation of the glorious mysteries will bring back to us the thought of the reward, exceeding great, which God has in store for all who serve Him. The Confraternity of the Living Rosary has been formed for those who have not time to recite the whole Rosary, or five mysteries of it, daily. It is composed of fifteen persons, each of whom undertakes to recite one mystery daily, and is enriched with many indulgences.

There still remain two points of view from which the Rosary may be considered. One is with regard to prayers in common, or family prayers; the other is with regard to indulgences.

That prayers said in common are specially pleasing to God we cannot doubt for a moment, for are we not told: 'If two of you consent upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by my Father who is in heaven'; and also: 'Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them'? The early Christians were so impressed with the truth of these words that, as we know, they constantly met

for prayer; and when prevented by the great persecutions from praying publicly, they assembled in private to pray with their families, servants, and slaves. The teaching of the Church has ever been to encourage family prayer; and that such prayer is a source of untold blessing, of a holy union of hearts such as contributes more than anything else to peace and happiness in a household, cannot for a moment be disputed. We all want blessings on our families, on our undertakings, on those we love; and yet so blind are we, but too often, to our interests that we neglect to pray for them, though God never ceases to urge us in the inspired writings to do so. Or, if we do ask Him, we neglect to do so in the ways appointed and approved by Him.

There is no prayer more suitable than the Rosary to be said in common, combining as it does the advantages of both vocal and mental prayer. Prayers that are purely vocal, however beautiful in themselves, become monotonous when we constantly hear them repeated, so that we run the risk in the end of saying them (or hearing them said) without any real attention of the mind or heart. But as regards the Rosary, though the mind may wander from the consideration of the words, the habit—so soon gained—of keeping the attention fixed on the mystery, prevents it when said devoutly from ever degenerating into a 'vain repetition' such as our Lord's words so emphatically condemn.[1] There is no prayer on which the Church has more distinctly set the seal of her approval, by enriching it with a great treasure of indulgences, than the Rosary.

To show great appreciation of indulgences is to show great love for the Precious Blood of our Lord, by which we were redeemed, and by virtue of which the Church disposes—as from the heavenly treasury of her Divine Spouse—a temporal indulgence, or remittance of the punishment due to our sins (as the Catechism tells us) after their guilt is remitted. We

[1] See Appendix III.

shall not require much reflection to see how greatly we need indulgences. The customs and usages of the day are so utterly opposed to penance, or even to that supernatural spirit of penance which theologians tell us is so pleasing to God, by which (like the good thief) we accept of the trials and sufferings of life in punishment of our sins, that our folly would indeed be great if we did not avail ourselves of the mercy of God and the indulgences which the Church so liberally places at our disposal. We require these indulgences not only for ourselves but for the souls in Purgatory, whom a double obligation of justice and charity obliges us to help. An obligation of justice because we shall never know till the Day of Judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, how many are detained there owing (possibly) to the bad example or the scandal we have given them, or the duties we have neglected in their regard. Charity obliges us likewise to help the souls in Purgatory; if there be any near to us who have gone before to that silent land of suffering and expiation, we are bound to help them with our prayers and suffrages. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is yearning for their release. The loving heart of Mary is sorrowing for them. There is no act of charity we can perform which is more pleasing to God than those which are devoted to their succour. These should surely be powerful motives with us to use indulgenced prayers. Faber asks why we should make use of any vocal prayers which have not these privileges attached to them now that the Church has given them in such abundance, and certainly we should do well in our choice of prayers to be influenced by this motive. Many ejaculations have large indulgences attached to them: such, for instance, as the short acts of faith, hope, and charity. The recitation of the *Angelus* is a devotion specially recommended to us by the Church, not only on account of the large indulgences attached to it, but because it recalls three times a day the sacred mystery of the Incarnation. The

devotion of the 'Way of the Cross' is also greatly indulgenced.

Before concluding, a few words about the method in which we should say vocal prayer may be useful. St. Teresa's advice on this point is very practical.

'Know, my daughters,' she says, 'that as to our prayer being mental or not, the difference does not consist in keeping the mouth shut or open. For if, while uttering a prayer vocally, I remain interiorly recollected and alive to the fact that I am speaking with God, *being more intent on this thought* than on the words I utter, I am at one and the same time practising both vocal and mental prayer. But should anyone assert that it is sufficient to speak to God merely with the lips when you recite the "Our Father," though your heart may be all the while thinking of the world, I will not stay to argue with such a one. For if you would conduct yourself in a proper manner when speaking to so great a Lord, it is right you should reflect both *with whom* you are speaking and who you yourself are, at least if you wish to speak with due respect.' [1]

We learn therefore from St. Teresa—as common-sense indeed teaches us—that to pray with wilful distractions is not only time wasted, it is worse, for it is to offer an insult to our loving and merciful Saviour. But (it may be naturally urged) we do not intend to have distractions. They come in spite of ourselves; and this leads us to a second consideration: Do we make any serious effort to free our minds from disturbing thoughts before we begin to pray? That this is a most necessary condition for salutary prayer we learn from Holy Writ: 'Prepare your mind for prayer, and be not as one who tempteth God.' And again we have the admonition: 'Accursed be he who doeth the work of God negligently.'

Spiritual writers, recognizing this patent fact, recommend

[1] St. Teresa, *Pater Noster*, p. 38.

two preparations for prayer—one a remote one, and the other a proximate one.

The remote consists principally in cultivating the presence of God in our souls, by turning to Him frequently in the course of the day, offering Him our homage, giving Him thanks—if only by a passing ejaculation, such as the familiar *Deo gratias*. This is what St. Paul calls 'having our conversation in heaven.'

The proximate preparation consists in giving a few moments to silent communion of the soul with God before we begin our vocal prayer—*e.g.* before saying the Rosary or any other devotion; offering Him our service, making a distinct intention of doing it for love of Him, and to please Him and to glorify His holy name.

If, in spite of all our efforts, distractions come, let us humble ourselves before God, and we may be sure that our prayers on those days in which we pray with pain and difficulty are not those least acceptable to Him.

Let us, finally, always keep in mind that it matters little if our thoughts wander from the words we are uttering as long as we keep them fixed on God. As a devout writer says: 'In prayer a man may be attending to the words, and this is a thing of a wholly material nature; he may be attending to the sense of the words, and this is rather study than prayer. And lastly his whole thoughts may be directed to God, and this is true prayer. To consider sentences or language is unnecessary; the mind must be elevated above self and must be wholly absorbed in the thought of God. . . . To this state of elevation the ignorant may arrive as easily as the learned. It even frequently happens that he who repeats a psalm without understanding its words, utters a much more holy prayer than the learned man who can explain its meaning. Words, in fact, are not indispensable to an act of prayer; when one is truly rapt in the spirit, an uttered prayer becomes rather an impediment and ought to yield to the wholly mental.'

ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

To put into writing all that could be said about Holy Mass would take a lifetime, and fill volumes; and yet it is on a due understanding of this, the central devotion of the Catholic Faith, that our spiritual life in great measure depends. To enable us to appreciate it as it deserves, we should learn the place that sacrifice occupies in the order of Divine Providence as revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures; bearing always in mind the great fact that the Mission of Jesus Christ, as He Himself tells us, was not to destroy but to fulfil.

Sacrifice has occupied the foremost place in the religion of mankind from the beginning. The reason of this is not far to seek; the stains of sin, the recollection stretching far back into the past of the creature's offences against the Creator, have left an indelible mark on the whole human race. These stains were of a kind which could only be wiped out by blood, and that blood was—so all the types foreshadowed, and the promises made by God to man signified—the Blood of One equally innocent and equally exalted, Who in His own Person should atone for all. But in the meantime we know that vicarious sacrifices were especially ordained by God; that they were offered up as a confession of guilt on the part of man, and were accepted by Him not as expiatory of themselves, as they had no such value, but as an acknowledgment of man's indebtedness to God, and of His sovereign and all-pervading greatness, and His power over life and death.

A sacrifice, therefore, is essential to a religion which claims to be divine, as Fr. Humphrey points out in his 'One Mediator.' It is not only of divine institution, but it satisfies a God-implanted instinct common to all races and all religions. Thus in the Pagan cults it is not the offering up of sacrifices that is condemned, but their being offered to false gods or devils. So that St. Paul, contrasting the two sacrifices, the sacrifice of the New Law and that of the heathens, says: 'The things which the heathens sacrifice they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that you should be made partakers with devils. You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils: you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils.' Here the Apostle in unmistakable terms draws a parallel between the two sacrifices, and shows their incompatibility.

The very idea of sacrifice is bound up with the idea of God; a Being so supreme that He could only adequately be worshipped, and His sovereignty acknowledged, by annihilation, which, vicariously performed, is the meaning of all sacrifices since the first one we read of in Holy Writ, of which it is said: 'The Lord had respect to Abel, and to his offerings.' 'Genuflections,' says St. Thomas, 'prostrations, and other indications of such like honour, may be offered also to men, though with a different intent; but no one has judged that sacrifice should be offered to anyone unless he esteemed him to be God or pretended so to esteem him. But the external sacrifice represents the true internal sacrifice according to which the human mind offers itself to God. Now our mind offers itself to God as being the source of its creation, as being the Author of its operation, as being the End of its beatitude, and these three things belong to the supreme principle of things alone.'[1]

The idea of sacrifice as the only true worship of God,

[1] St. Thomas, *Contra Gent.* iii. 120; T. W. Allies, *Church and State.*

therefore, was implanted in man from the beginning. But together with this idea there was another instilled into him, an altogether higher—a divine idea; this came as a partial glimpse, as it were, into futurity, a lightning flash disappearing as soon as seen. For we read in Genesis (xiv. 18) of 'Melchisedech the king of Salem bringing forth bread and wine, for he was the priest of the most high God.' And again, when the Almighty was wroth with His people for their many transgressions, He declares: 'I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation; for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts.' (Mal. i. 10, 11.)

'Now what we have seen of the original institution of sacrifice will help to show how absolutely divine an act it was which our Lord took upon Himself in establishing a sacrifice for His people. But He was not only ordering a new worship; He was likewise at once fulfilling and abolishing by that fulfilment the old, that which had prevailed from the beginning of man's race. Instead of the blood of animals poured out profusely all over the world, He said: "This is the chalice, the new testament in My Blood, which shall be shed for you;" and speaking as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, using also the special sacrificial term, He said: "This is My Body, which is given for you; do this in commemoration of me." The act was doubly a divine act, in appointing a sacrifice for the whole human race, and in making His own Body that sacrifice; the first an act of divine authority, the second not that only, but pointing out the personal union of the Godhead with the Manhood, in virtue of which the communication of His flesh gives life to the world, as He had foretold a year before: "The bread which I will give

is My flesh for the life of the world." Thus the Christian sacrifice is the counterpart of the original institution, and throws the light of fulfilment upon that offering of the blood of bulls and goats which seemed in itself so unreasonable; which would have been so, but that it carried in itself the mystery hidden from the foundation of the world. Thus it was that the animal creation placed below man was chosen to bear witness in its flesh and blood to the offering which was to restore man, and the Lord of life made use of the life which He had given to signify in a speaking prophecy that supreme exhibition of His mercy, His justice, and His majesty which He had purposed from the beginning. If the earth without Calvary might seem to have been a slaughter-house, Calvary made it an altar.'[1]

The very words with which our Divine Saviour instituted this sacrifice carried with them the signification of its meaning. 'Do this,' He said; not 'Offer up this prayer,' or 'Pronounce these words.' The Sacrifice of the Mass, therefore, is an action, the greatest that can be performed in this world; for it not only commemorates the great Atonement of the Cross, but it is in substance and efficacy One with it. And as Jesus offered Himself as a true and proper sacrifice to His Heavenly Father on the altar of the Cross, so He renews this sacrifice in an unbloody manner on the altars of the Catholic Church in the Sacrifice of the Mass. It is therefore Jesus Himself who 'celebrates His own death'[2]—a Divine Victim—in the Mass. He who was prefigured by the Paschal Lamb, of whom the Baptist, inspired by the Holy Ghost, cried: 'Behold the Lamb of God: behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world.'

And again we have the glorious vision of St. John in the Apocalypse; how he saw 'in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures . . . a Lamb standing as it were slain': a sight visible to the angels of God whenever Holy

[1] Allies, *op. cit.* p. 264. [2] Bishop Challoner.

Mass is offered up, but seen by man, as long as he is hemmed in by the prison-house of the body, by faith alone.

Besides being the Victim in the Sacrifice of the Mass, Jesus Christ is also the High Priest. As St. Paul teaches, the priesthood of our Lord was prefigured by Melchisedech, 'the king of justice and of peace'; and as all legitimate priesthood ended in Christ, in whom all the types were fulfilled, so all the previous sacrifices which were 'inefficacious,' being only figures of the great Reality, the divine Atonement on Mount Calvary terminated as well. But: 'The Apostle does not exclude sacrifices from the economy of the New Testament. He excludes only such *inefficacious* sacrifices on the one hand, and on the other any *repetition* of the One Sacrifice, in order to *new* satisfaction and a *new* redemption. The infinitely meritorious Sacrifice of the Cross, from the very fact that it afforded a complete and adequate satisfaction, was offered once only, nor is there any necessity for its repetition.'[1] 'There exists therefore now but One Priest, One Victim, One Sacrifice, One Altar. Tertullian, writing in the second century, uses this profound expression in describing Jesus Christ. He calls Him the "Catholicus Patris Sacerdos," by which he means, first, that Jesus Christ is *the Priest* of the Catholic Church; secondly, that He is the only Priest recognised by the Eternal Father as the Catholic or Universal Priest, through whose hands all gifts of prayer and sacrifices must be presented to God in order for acceptance; and lastly, that God neither heals, nor forgives, nor teaches, nor blesses, nor rewards, nor saves through the power of any other. All is "through Jesus Christ our Lord." St. Cyprian teaches the same doctrine when he calls our Lord the "Summus Sacerdos Patris"—the High Priest of the Father. The question may perhaps be asked: Are there, then, no priests in the Catholic Church? Christ has no succession of priests offering in their *own* right their *own*

[1] *The One Mediator*, by Rev. G. Humphrey, S.J., p. 21.

sacrifices as in the Old Law. But those who are rightly ordained partake of Christ's priesthood, receiving that certain but limited communication of His power which He was pleased to give. It is not their own but Christ's priesthood that they receive and exercise, and hence many of the Fathers call them "Christ's vicars," "ambassadors," "representatives," and "ministers," signifying that when they teach, absolve, and offer sacrifice they are discharging Christ's sacred sacerdotal office.'[1]

'Who,' asks St. Cyprian, 'is more truly a priest of God most high than our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered a sacrifice to God the Father, and offered the same sacrifice which Melchisedech offered (that is, bread and wine), namely, His own Body and Blood?'[2] 'His Body,' says St. Augustine, is offered up instead of all those sacrifices and oblations, and it is given to the communicants.' St. Ambrose, Chrysostom, and a multitude of other Fathers hold similar language. The ancient liturgies, written in many languages and used in many different parts of the Church, testify likewise to the universality of this belief. They speak of the 'tremendous, divine, unbloody, the perpetual, the living sacrifice of the Lamb who being sacrificed never dies'; they declare that 'our sacrifice is the body and blood of the priest Himself, Christ our Lord.'[3] To the eye of faith, accordingly, Jesus is as truly present in the Mass as He was when He walked with His disciples beside the sea of Gennesareth or when He spoke those comforting words to the sick woman, 'Be of good heart, daughter; thy faith hath made thee whole.' He is there in a twofold capacity. As High Priest He offers up that august oblation which He made, once for all, on the

[1] *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, by Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster, p. 21.

[2] 'Suum scilicet corpus et sanguinem,' Cyprian, *Ep.* 63. See also Clem. Al. *Strom.* iv. 25. *Cath. Dict.* p. 320.

[3] See quotation in Franzelin, *De Euch.* p. 319 *seq.*; *Cath. Dict. ibid.*

Cross, but which every time it is renewed in an unbloody manner on the altar becomes, again, a source of grace and benediction and healing to all who are present and assist devoutly at it. Once more grace is going out of Him and healing all. Those merciful hands and feet of His, pierced with the cruel nails of the executioner, but now glorified exceedingly by the glory which He has with His Father from all eternity, are ever witnessing to His plentiful redemption of the children of men, ever pleading for them and averting the wrath of God from them which they have deserved for their sins.

He is also present on the altar as a Victim, and is there offered up by the priest, His representative, for his own wants and those of the whole Church of God.

Little wonder is there at the vehemence of our loving and merciful Saviour's desire to eat this Pasch with His disciples; for He well knew that they would find in this adorable Sacrifice and Sacrament all that they required for every need. He knew that they who should partake devoutly of this Food would never hunger more; that they who drank of this life-giving Fountain would never thirst; that generation after generation would come to this holy Sacrifice and find in it strength for all the trials and battles of life, consolation in its sorrows, and courage to persevere to the end.

Whilst He was on earth our Blessed Lord could be but in one spot. The human nature which He had assumed put a limit on the loving desires of His Heart. But here He can gratify all His aspirations; His children can visit Him and speak to Him, as friend speaks to friend, as lover to the beloved; there are no limits to His intercourse with them. Again, the humiliations inflicted on Him by His assumption of the nature of man were not sufficient for Him. He was obedient, He tells us, unto death—even to the death of the Cross; but here He carries His obedience, His adorable

submission, further. He is obedient to the priest, His minister. He is at the mercy of the sinner, who, venturing up to the altar rails or ministering in His name, like Judas, betrays his Master with a kiss. He comes alike to the just and the unjust. To all this, and much more, does Jesus make Himself liable in His capacity of Victim on the altar for love of man.

Verily He could say: 'What is there I could have done for my vineyard that I have not done'?

We have hitherto considered the Mass in reference to the sacrifices of the Old Law, by which it was prefigured, and to the great Atonement of the Son of God on Mount Calvary. It remains for us now to consider the four great ends of sacrifice for which Jesus offers Himself daily for us in the Mass.

The four great requirements or wants of man, if we may so call them, respond to the four ends of sacrifice.

Man has sinned; he requires, therefore, forgiveness of sin. He receives numberless benefits from God, benefits of a most tremendous character, some of which he shares with his fellowmen, such as his creation and redemption, but others which are personal to himself. For all these he is under the binding necessity of giving thanks to God. He must also praise God; for this was one of the objects of his creation. He has also many things to ask of Him; the fourth end, therefore, is that of petition.

Man has many wants; they exist by the very fact of his living in a land of exile, far from his true Home. And these wants, which are partly fed by his natural infirmities as man, his weakness both spiritual and physical, are so many instincts instilled into his heart, bidding him turn to his Creator and God for the help He is longing to extend to him.

The ordinances of the Old Law, besides providing, by God's express command, burnt offerings as recognition of His supreme dominion over man, instituted also what were called propitiatory sacrifices, in order to avert calamities and to

obtain certain temporal advantages. Thus Samuel offered up a lamb in sacrifice when the Philistines were about to attack the armies of Israel, 'and he cried to the Lord for Israel,' and the Lord hearing his prayers took compassion on His people, and the Philistines were overthrown and destroyed (1 Kings vii.). David also propitiated the Almighty by holocausts and peace offerings when the plague threatened to devastate the chosen people, and, we read, the plague was stayed from Israel (2 Kings xxiv.).

In the Sacrifice of the Mass, Jesus fully and abundantly discharges all these duties for man; to all who, by devoutly assisting at Mass in a state of grace and uniting their intention with the adorable High-Priest and Victim there present, make His divine oblation theirs, and thus by means of it, and by the unspeakable goodness and mercy of God, offer Him this Sacrifice for all their wants and necessities both in this world and in the world to come. Jesus, then, in Holy Mass, enables us to make an offering to God of the greatest value; but that does not mean that He leaves nothing for us to do. His Sacrifice on the altar, as on the Cross, is of infinite value, but the advantage we gain from it is subject to human limitations. It is subject, like any other action which we perform, to the purity of intention which we bring to it, and the love and fervour with which we assist at it.

We can bring no better dispositions to profit by it than a knowledge of our own exceeding misery, and indebtedness to Him, our One Mediator, our 'Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just.' But this consciousness need not discourage us. If, of ourselves, we can do nothing, Jesus in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has put an immense treasure at our disposal. He has 'emptied Himself,' as St. Paul tells us, but it was in order to give more and ever more abundantly to us; so that we may apply to ourselves the words of the Apostle: 'I give thanks to my God always for you, for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus, that in all

things you are made rich in Him. . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.' (1 Cor. i. 4, 5, 7.) The Sacrifice of the Mass, therefore, is one of the means by which we enter into our inheritance, and by which we partake in Christ and with Him of the kingdom which He has won for us. He it was, our loving and merciful Saviour, Who, by His Incarnation, by His poverty, His labours—when He lived in His own world as a stranger and an outcast, for love of us—by His agony in the garden, His scourging, His crowning with thorns, His death on the Cross, earned these riches for us. *We* have but to enter into possession of them. Should not this thought make our hearts burn with love for Him, and with an immense desire to profit by the graces and riches He places at our disposal, not only our own souls, but also for those of others?

For it is not for our own wants, spiritual or temporal, only, that we should plead through the merits of Jesus Christ in the Mass. There is a wise saying, that 'no man saves his soul alone,' and again, that without zeal there can be no love. *Qui non zelat non amat.* Love of God will always show itself in love for our neighbour, in a longing desire that *all* souls, for all of which Jesus Christ died, should come and partake of His plentiful redemption. He who truly loves God would grudge that a single soul in the entire universe should perish in ignorance of what God has done for him; and yet we know that hundreds of millions of heathens live and die in this ignorance, and that immense numbers of our fellow-countrymen, even, know nothing of this 'unspeakable gift' of God, Holy Mass, or of His spouse the Holy Catholic Church. How few have the power or the vocation to work in the missionary field! But to *all* the power of intercessory prayer is open, and there is no prayer to be compared for efficacy with the one we offer up at Mass in union with that of the Divine High-Priest and Victim.

The first requirement to be heard is humility, for it is said: To whom shall I have respect but to him that is

poor and little, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word?' (Is. lxvi. 2); and another is a tender devotion to the great Mother of God. There is a special reason, the Church teaches, for connecting the name of Mary with the Sacrifice of the Mass. We should keep two considerations prominently before us every time we assist at Mass. One is that we are about to be present at the birth of our Saviour, and the other that He is there present as on the altar of the cross. Thus, as the shepherds, when they obeyed the angels' invitation and went to Bethlehem, found Jesus with Mary His Mother; and again the Evangelist tells us 'there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother,' so she is ever to be found at His side in her official capacity as mother of the children redeemed by the precious Blood of her Son.

The angels of God are also present while the Sacrifice of the Mass is being offered up; this we know by the teaching of the universal Church. St. John Chrysostom says: 'During that time (of the Holy Sacrifice) angels stand by the priest, the whole order of heavenly Powers fervently pray, the sanctuary is full of choirs of angels come to honour Him who is offered up in sacrifice.' Again, preaching to the people of Antioch, he says: 'You can pray at home indeed, but not as you can in church. You will not be so favourably heard when you pray singly as when you pray with your brethren. Not only men, but even the angels adore and pray in the awful place at that tremendous hour of the Sacrifice; for the angels then, showing the Lord's Body, pray to God for men, as though they said, "We entreat Thy mercy for those whom Thou hast anticipated in love by loving them first. We entreat Thee for those for whom Thou hast sacrificed this body."'[1] This doctrine has ever been inculcated by the Church, as St. John the Golden-mouthed, writing in the fourth century, testifies. 'You will not,' he says, 'be so favourably heard when you pray singly.' We pray

[1] Cardinal Vaughan, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, p. 54.

with immeasurably greater power and efficacy when we unite our prayers to those of our fellow-men and in 'the company of many thousands of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect' and to those of the Blessed Mother of God; above all, uniting ourselves to Christ, our adorable Head, our Advocate with the Father. For, as is daily said in the Canon of the Mass: 'by Him, and with Him and in Him, *per ipsum, et cum ipso et in ipso*, is to Thee, God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory.'

In the Mass we possess a lasting memorial of the Passion and death of our Lord. Every part of the Mass owes its meaning and significance to the Passion. At the elevation Jesus Christ, truly present in the Host, is lifted up to be seen by the people as He was lifted up heretofore on the cross. Again, the Host is broken and divided to signify that His Body was rent for love of us and His side opened with a spear. The crucifix above the tabernacle—without which Mass can never be celebrated—is ever visible to the congregation, silently admonishing them to 'look upon Him whom they have pierced,' and recalling their wandering thoughts to His sufferings and death.

If there was no other reason than this to urge us to increase in our love and appreciation of Holy Mass it would be sufficient; for we know by the teaching of the Church, by the words of Scripture, even by the instincts born of love, of our own hearts, that Jesus desires that the memory of His sufferings should never pass out of our minds, and that we should constantly dwell on them with ever-increasing feelings of love and gratitude. Could anything be more piteous, more fitted to touch our hearts with sorrow and compunction for our past neglect, than those words the prophet puts into His mouth: 'My people have forgotten Me days without number'? Truly may we say to ourselves, looking at Him prostrate in His agony, falling beneath the weight of His cross, His blessed Body a mass of wounds: 'His look

was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not.'

Experience proves to us that wherever love and faith in the adorable Sacrifice are wanting, or have grown cold, love and faith in the Passion of Christ are likewise wanting or have declined, so that this, the cause of our Redemption, the very foundation of Christianity, is relegated to the Limbo of worn-out creeds, or is deprived of all its life-giving and vivid details as being too realistic—though we know that every one of these was treasured up and noted for us by the Evangelists through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. How often are those words recalled to us when we think of our own neglect, and that of our fellow-men: 'I am silent, and as one that seeth not, and thou hast forgotten Me'!

To meditate constantly and lovingly, therefore, on every incident of the blessed Passion of our Lord is not only a source of the greatest merit to our souls, but it is the devotion of all others, as we learn by the revelations of the saints, that is most pleasing to God. In the first place it will excite a tender gratitude in our hearts for Jesus crucified for love of us; also it will make us realise more than anything else the desire He had to win our hearts, and the immense value He puts upon them. One drop of the Blood of the Son of God would have been sufficient to redeem a thousand worlds; and Jesus sheds all His Blood, amid numberless incidents of the most heart-rending kind, in order that the recollection of them might appeal to us most powerfully, and that, as the prophet says, we may 'look upon Him whom we have pierced, and mourn for Him as it is the custom to mourn for an only son.'

Further, if every time we assisted at Mass we were to recall the thought of our Saviour's Passion, it would fill us with a great horror of sin. The Passion of our Divine Saviour was the penalty He paid for the sins of mankind. There is not one of us, the Immaculate Mother of God alone excepted, who

has not added to the sufferings of Jesus and to the vision of man's iniquities which bowed Him down to the ground, and was the cause of His bloody sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane.

There is another advantage we shall reap from devotion to the Passion, and that is a great sense of consolation on our deathbeds. He who has stayed with Mary and the beloved disciple on Mount Calvary watching with them at the feet of Jesus Crucified, who, as the 'Following of Christ' says, 'has willingly dwelt in the sacred wounds of Jesus Christ,' who has assisted at Mass with this great truth constantly before him, 'Christ died for *me* and offers Himself up again for love of me to His Eternal Father,' such a one will have the company of Jesus at that moment, the most dreaded by the children of men, and his love and piety will be repaid a hundredfold.

This thought connecting the mystical death of Christ on the altar with our own deaths, with the object of making intercession with Him for peace, and the grace of contrition in our last moments, is one that we come across frequently in the interesting rhymed prayers which have been handed down to us from Catholic times.

For instance we have in the 'Instruction to Parish Priests,' this advice to the people, that they are to say the following prayer 'fair and softly, without bere' (*i.e.* noise):

Jesu Lord, welcome Thou be
In form of bread as I Thee see;
Jesu, for Thy holy Name,
Shield me to-day from sin and shame.
Shrift and housel, Lord, Thou grant me bo (*i.e.* both)
Ere that I shall hence go,
And very contrition of my sin,
That I, Lord, never die therein;
And as thou wert of a May i-bore (*i.e.* born of a maid),
Suffer me never to be forlore.[1]

[1] *Instructions*, &c. i. 284 *seq.* (E. E. Text Soc.). Bridgett's *History of the Holy Eucharist*, ii. 65. It is to our Catholic forefathers that we owe the proverb: 'Alms impoverish us not, and Mass hindereth not.'

Another is of greater age and is very touching:

Loued be Thou, King,
And blessed be Thou, King,
Of all Thy gifts good;
And thanked be Thou, King,
Jesu, all my joying,
That for me spilt Thy Blood,
And died upon the Rood;
Thou give me grace to sing
The song of Thy louing. Amen.

Pater Noster. Ave Maria. Credo.

The following lines are translated from the Gaelic, and have been handed down by tradition from pre-Reformation times:

Hail to Thee, O Body of Christ;
Hail to Thee, O King of Hosts;
Hail to Thee, O gracious Godhead;
Hail to Thee, O true manhood.
As thou wert pleased, O Christ, to come
Under the cover of bread, Thy whole Body
Heal my soul from every evil
That is upon me now.
Hail to Thee, Blood and Flesh;
Hail to Thee, Food of Grace.
Wash my sins in the Blood of Thy grace.
Hail to Thee, both God and man!
Guard me from him that goeth about.
May I receive Thee at the hour of my death!
O Trinity without end, without beginning,
Neither let Thy anger be upon me.
Hail to Thee, true Body born of Mary Virgin,
By Thy being pierced, shedding waves of Blood,
Holy Trinity, grant us Thy Sacraments
To-day and at our death-hour. Amen.[1]

It is in the contemplation of Christ's loving care for us as exemplified in the Sacrifice of the Mass that we shall find

[1] Bridgett, *op. cit.* p. 66.

great consolation in the vicissitudes and trials of life. For it is to the joy the Christian soul finds in that august mystery that the words of Scripture may be applied: 'Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy Face'; and thus St. Augustine says: 'He who protects us during this life will be Himself our dwelling-place after this life, for so the thirtieth psalm makes petition to Him, "Be Thou unto me a God, a protector, a house of refuge." Therefore we shall be hidden in the secret of God's Face. Do you expect to hear from me what the secret of God's Face is? Purify your hearts, that He whom you invoke may enter in and enlighten you. Be His dwelling-place, and He will be yours; let Him dwell in you, and you will dwell in Him. If you receive Him into your heart during this life, He will receive you after this life into the secret of His countenance.'[1]

Let Him dwell in you, and you shall dwell in Him; for the end of love is union, and it is this union which Jesus longs for, and which takes place in our hearts, every time we receive Him into them in Holy Communion, at Mass. For, however fervent our prayers, however pure our intentions, we cannot gain the same merit from the Sacrifice of the Mass unless we participate in it by a devout Communion. If we are prevented, however, from receiving this divine food of our souls sacramentally, we should never fail to invite Him to come spiritually into our souls and take up His abode there. We know by the revelations of the saints that these spiritual Communions are most pleasing to God. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was shown in a vision two chalices filled with Hosts both beautiful and resplendent, but one exceeding the other greatly in splendour; and these chalices were presented by the angels of God to the Eternal Father. These were her sacramental and spiritual Communions, and though the sacramental Communions were more meritorious in the sight of God,

[1] *Leaves from St. Augustine*, p. 127.

nevertheless she was told that she derived immense advantages from the spiritual ones, and that these were also very pleasing to Him.

We must not forget the souls of the Faithful departed among our intentions at Holy Mass. No prayers we can say for them can equal in value the Masses we offer up for them, or still more the Masses we have said for them. The Church ordains that a *memento* should be made for them in every Mass that is celebrated—commemorating alike in each Mass the living and the dead, as being equally children of God and equally in need of His merciful help and protection. Let us join our prayers to the priest's at that sacred moment, imploring our great High-Priest to speak for them to His Eternal Father, and to obtain their speedy release from Purgatory should they still be detained there.

There are numberless different ways of assisting at the adorable Sacrifice. All, no doubt, are beneficial to the soul, and we may gather fruit from them by the additional knowledge they give of the ways in which it may be made profitable to us.

Whatever prayers we offer up during Mass, whether we say the Rosary, or make use of meditation or prayer-book, we should never lose sight for long of the stupendous mystery at which by the mercy of God we are allowed to assist. All devotions should be subservient to this, and every thought should be merged in this great thought: The sacrifice of Calvary is being renewed on this altar; Jesus is offering Himself up for me and for all sinners.

In the prayers of the Ordinary of the Mass we have the type of all prayers. The beautiful psalm with which it begins encourages us to go with joy and alacrity into His presence who gives joy to our youth. Then, for fear we should be discouraged by our sins, we say the *Confiteor*, confessing them humbly to God and His saints, and imploring His forgiveness for them. In the *Gloria in excelsis* we join

our voices to the angels giving glory to God and promising peace to men of good will. The Church puts this angel-song of rejoicing at the beginning of Mass with a special meaning, for in every Mass Jesus is again born mystically on the altar as He was in the stable of Bethlehem. So let us unite with her in praising God and giving Him thanks for coming to us as He did to the shepherds and the wise men.

During the Epistle and Gospel we cannot do better than meditate on the passage of the Scriptures put before us either in the Mass of the saint of the day, or the proper of the day—should it be in Lent or at any other special time. This concludes the first part of the Mass.

The second part begins with the *Credo* and ends with the *Benedictus*. During this time we may either say the Rosary (or some part of it) or use the prayers of the Missal. When the priest turns round to the congregation to say the *Orate, fratres*, let us not forget this invitation he gives: 'Brethren, pray that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty;' and so Fr. Cochem, in his 'Holy Mass,' says: 'Ponder well the immense favour Christ bestows on thee in making thee a mystical priest and empowering thee to offer the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, not for thyself alone, but also for others. Bishop Fornerus tells us: "It is not the priest alone who offers the Mass for himself and for others; every Christian who is present may do the same, for his own needs and those of his friends." Again, after the elevation of the chalice he says: "O Lord, we Thy servants, as also Thy holy people, offer unto Thy most excellent majesty, of Thy gifts and grants, a pure Host," &c. Here the priest says in so many words that not he alone, but all the people of God with him, offer this pure holocaust.'[1] This thought, therefore, should be constantly before us during the holy Sacrifice, that we are not merely spectators, but actively

[1] *Explanations of the Holy Mass*, p. 301.

engaged in uniting our prayers and intentions to the great High-Priest and those of the priest His minister.

At the *Benedictus* let us join with the priest in saluting our Divine Saviour in the words of the multitude who went out to meet Him in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and say, 'Blessed art Thou who comest in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!'

The third part of the Mass is from the beginning of the Canon to the Holy Communion. Let us in the first place prepare to receive our Divine Saviour by acts of love and desire. He is about to appear, the Desired of nations—the most beautiful among the children of men, our only Good, our God. What can we do for Him Who has done so much for us? The Scripture answers as well as asks the question: 'I will take the chalice of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord . . . I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise, and I will call on the name of the Lord.' At the Elevation let us look up to Him Who is raised up for our adoration, and, striking our breast, say with the publican: 'O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' During the time in which our Lord is present on the altar we should have much to say to Him. In the first place let us offer Him up to His Eternal Father for the four ends of sacrifice: that is—shortly—in forgiveness for our sins, in praise and adoration of His holy Name, in thanksgiving for the blessings He never ceases to bestow on us, and then for any special intentions for which we may want to pray. In the *Pater Noster*, which follows directly afterwards, we should join in spirit with our Blessed Lord, there truly present, and say it, with Him, to His Eternal Father. After the *Agnus Dei* let us join very fervently with our Divine Saviour in praying for the peace, unity, and exaltation of the Holy Catholic Church, that all the sheep that are His may hear His voice, and that there may be one fold and one Shepherd.

At the Communion, if we are not receiving our Blessed

Lord sacramentally, let us invite Him to come to us spiritually; and during the fourth and last part of Mass, from the Communion to the last Gospel, let us occupy our minds with thoughts of love and thanksgiving for His mercy in allowing us to be present at this adorable Sacrifice, and for the graces He has bestowed on us by means of it.

If we could for a moment realise—which we shall never do in this life—the benefits we derive from devoutly assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, we should never slacken in our efforts to go to it, and we should not be satisfied with one Mass, we should do our best to hear if possible more, daily. We should ever be seeking to add to their number, in the same way as misers store up their gold, believing that by this means we are laying up a great treasure in heaven, as well as using the best means of obtaining many blessings, temporal as well as spiritual, on earth. With regard to Masses of obligation on Sundays and feast days, theologians in general agree that it is necessary to be present from the *Credo* to the Post-Communion in order to fulfil this duty, and avoid mortal sin. Some consider it is necessary to be present at the Gospel as well, but the former opinion is more common. It is a venial sin to be absent at any part of the Holy Sacrifice at the Mass of obligation on Sundays and feast-days. We can benefit by the graces bestowed at Mass, however, when there is no question of fulfilling the obligation, when it is half over; we can also merit by uniting our intention to that of the priests celebrating at several different altars, though we can only personally assist at one Mass.

In the same way, though in a lesser degree, we can gain many graces by uniting ourselves in spirit, day or night, with the numberless Masses which are being offered up all over the world. Our loving and merciful Saviour will accept our intention and wish to be present at them even when there is no possibility of doing more; for, as He tells us, 'the preparation of our hearts is agreeable to Him.'

The idea of sacrifice is at the root of the Christian faith, and all its instincts and aspirations are bound up with it. Thus St. Paul says: 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service.' And St. Augustine teaches that 'a true sacrifice is every work which is done that we may cleave in holy union to God: that is, with a reference to that great end by which we may become truly happy.'

It is on the true apprehension of this adorable mystery, its place in the order of God's Providence, and the application of its unspeakable merits to all our wants and necessities that the growth of a soul in Catholic truth largely depends. In fine, to use the well-known words of a great servant of God, lately beatified—Blessed John Fisher: 'He who goes about to take the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass from the Catholic Church, plots no less a calamity than if he tried to snatch the sun from the universe.'

THE RITUAL OF THE MASS

It is made a common matter of reproach against the Catholic Church that her services are of a dramatic character; appealing to the senses rather than the soul of man, and in direct opposition (or so it is urged) to the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That the Church enlists music and painting in her worship and in the decoration of her altars cannot be denied, but that such use is contrary to the maxims of Holy Writ can scarcely be alleged. Jesus had only words of praise for the Magdalene when she broke her box of alabaster and anointed His adorable feet with precious ointment. To the Catholic, Jesus is as much present, exposed at Benediction or hidden in the Tabernacle, as He was at Bethany; what wonder, therefore, that he brings, without fear of rebuke, his choicest gifts to His feet—music and flowers, paintings, and sweet-smelling incense?

Then, as regards ceremonial, it is true that our Divine Saviour did not specially ordain religious ceremonies of any kind. He Himself, however, complied with scrupulous exactness with the rites of the Jews, showing His reverence for them, and for the Temple where the Jews worshipped; and before ascending to heaven, in the words, 'All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations,' He gave His Apostles full authority to institute all that was necessary for the building up of the infant Church.

The first centuries of the Church's existence were centuries of persecution; but long before she had emerged from the catacombs we learn from the records there that she had begun the work at which she has never ceased since those days to labour—truly a labour of love—down to these present days in which we live: the work of the Divine praise, and of carrying out a ritual worthy of Him to whose service it is directed.

Man is made up of body as well as of soul. He is alive to ten thousand influences. If the concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life are constantly at work to drag him down, shall not God make use of the higher influences, who has Himself instilled them, to elevate man and to enlist him in His service? his eyes to see the beauty of God's Tabernacle with man and to praise Him for it, his hearing to enjoy the melody of chanting and of devout hymns? The poet and the painter, are they not to devote their God-given genius to the glory of His Holy Name?

The testimony of the Bible is incontestably in favour of this view. It appeals in the most striking manner to the instinct for the sublime and dramatic in man. As Wiseman says[1] in his 'Lectures on the Ceremonies of Holy Week,' 'Nothing can be more truly dramatic . . . than the opening of the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah, where the Messiah and a chorus are represented as holding a splendid colloquy together. The latter first asks: "Who is this that cometh from Edom with garments dyed in Bozra?" The other replies: "I am the proclaimer of justice, mighty in salvation." The chorus again demands: "Why then is thy raiment red, and thy garments as of one who hath trodden the wine-press?" And he again answers: "I have trodden the wine-press alone."' Wiseman goes on to show that the object of the Church similarly, in her Offices,

[1] *Life and Times of Cardinal Wiseman*, by Wilfrid Ward, p. 364.

is to bring the scenes in the life of our Blessed Lord so vividly before the minds of her children as to impress them with the belief that they are not merely spectators, but are themselves taking their part in them. 'This principle, which will be found to animate the Church service at every season, rules most remarkably that of Holy Week, and gives it soul and life. It is not intended to be merely commemorative or historical: it is, strictly speaking, representative. The Church puts herself into mourning as though her Spouse were now undergoing His cruel fate; she weeps over Jerusalem as if the measure of her iniquity were not yet filled up, and the punishment which has overtaken her might yet be averted.'[1] Again we read: 'Forms were the necessary means of bringing home spiritual truths to the natural man;

> The spiritual in Nature's market-place,
> The silent alphabet of heaven in man
> Made vocal—banners blazoning a Power
> That is not seen and rules from far away—
> A silken cord let down from Paradise,
> When fine philosophies would fail to draw
> The crowd from wallowing in the mire of earth.'[2]

But the Church has other objects, as well, in creating an elaborate ritual, besides the one we have mentioned of appealing to the poetic and dramatic instincts of man. She has to safeguard the precious dogmas confided to her charge; the Faith once delivered to saints. How could this be done without a rigorous system of ceremonial befitting the greatness of the august interests involved?

Kings and emperors do not allow their subjects to come into their presence without form and ceremony, and this not from motives of ostentation, but because these forms embody an actual truth, the superiority of the Lord's anointed over

[1] *Life and Times of Cardinal Wiseman*, p. 366.
[2] Tennyson, *Akbar's Dream*; *ibid.* p. 361.

their people, and the rights derived from it. How, then, should it be imagined that man could minister to his God without a strictly defined and most solemn and elaborate ceremonial? With justice Guizot says that the Catholic Church is the greatest school of reverence which the world has ever seen.

Simplicity—that is, absence of form in ritual and decoration of church and altars—is nowhere indicated as a feature of divine worship in the rites ordained by God in Holy Writ. On the contrary, they are marked by a great elaboration of detail, and much variety in ceremonial.

To sum up, therefore, in a subordinate sense, the use of ritual is to appeal not only to the heart and soul, but to the whole man. It is also intended to protect by means of it the dogmas with which it is concerned, especially those connected with the adorable Sacrament of the Altar. Again, it is intended in the case of the garments of the priest, whether sacrificial—as in Holy Mass—or otherwise, to denote the solemn offices in which the priest is engaged, and stamp him in the sight of the people as one endowed with special powers from God and ministering in His name.

A few words of explanation of the ritual of the Mass may be useful to those who have not time to give to the longer treatises (of which there are many) on the subject. The five Church colours are white, red, green, purple, and black. The first, emblematic of purity, is used for feasts of our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and saints not martyrs, throughout Eastertide and on feasts of the Blessed Sacrament.

Red is the colour used for feasts of the Holy Ghost (who descended on the Apostles in the form of fiery tongues) and for feasts of the martyrs.

Green is used on all days on which no festival occurs, except during the seasons of Advent, Lent, and Eastertide.

Purple is used, except on feast-days, in the penitential times of Advent and Lent, likewise on Rogation and Ember

days, and all days set apart for special supplication in times of trouble and distress.

Black is used on Good Friday and in Masses for the dead.

Each of the garments worn by the priest at Mass has a symbolical meaning. The alb and amice of white linen signify the purity of life required for the priesthood. The girdle round the loins signifies purity, and readiness, in the words of our Lord, to obey His will. The maniple which he wears on his arm (anciently a handkerchief) signifies his willingness to bear affliction in this world, looking for a heavenly reward, according to the psalm (cxxv.).

The stole, which is worn over the left shoulder by a deacon, is crossed over the breast of the priest at his ordination, and worn thus by him at Mass. The chasuble is worn either in the Roman form, with cross in front and a pillar at the back (both in commemoration of the Passion of our Lord), or in the Gothic form with the cross worn on the back and the pillar in front. These garments are put on (in the vestry if it is the case of a priest, or at the altar in the case of a Bishop) with special prayers appropriate to each garment.

The priest begins Mass by making the sign of the cross. This custom of making the sign of the cross at the beginning of all important and sacred actions dates from the earliest ages of the Church.[1] He then recites the forty-second psalm, preceding it and following it with the antiphon: 'I will go to the altar of God.'[2] There is a beautiful appropriateness in this psalm, encouraging, as it does, God's minister to go forward, when humility and the knowledge of his infirmities would tend to keep him back. All his confidence should be in God. 'Hope in God; for I will yet confess to Him, who is the salvation of my countenance and my God.'

[1] See Tertullian (*De Cor. Mil.* § 3); Oakeley, *Ceremonies of Mass*, p. 11.

[2] Antiphons are verses taken from psalms, emphasizing the leading idea contained in them.

The priest then recites the *Confiteor*, which he says alternately with the acolyte, representing the faithful assisting at Mass. This mutual confession is in compliance with the words of the Apostle: 'Confess your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be saved' (James v. 16). The absolution pronounced afterwards is not authoritative, but in the form of supplication.

Whilst ascending the altar steps the priest says a short prayer (see Missal) and then proceeds to kiss the altar stone, in which the relics of saints are always deposited, invoking at the same time the intercession of the saints whose relics are here, and of all the saints, that God would vouchsafe to grant him pardon of his sins; he then says the Introit.

The Introit (or Entrance) is taken, with few exceptions, from the Scriptures; it is followed by a verse from the Psalms, the *Gloria Patri*—which, however, is omitted in penitential seasons and in Masses for the dead—after which the passage from Scripture is repeated. The Introit varies according to the day; on Sundays and feasts (doubles of first class) it is always proper.[1] With the exception of a few saints distinguished by some special feature of sanctity, the Introit on saints' days is taken from the office of the saints of that class, *i.e.* martyrs, doctors, virgins, &c. An instance of the former is that of St. Francis of Assisi, the Introit of whose feast is taken from the words of St. Paul: 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ'; or that of St. Ignatius, commemorative of the glorious Order, founded by him, of the Society of Jesus: 'At the name of Jesus let every knee bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and let every tongue confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is in the Glory of God the Father.'

The Introit is followed by the *Kyrie eleison*, which is said nine times. Trhee times the *Kyrie* is addressed to God the Father, the *Christe* three times to God the Son, and the *Kyrie*

[1] That is, each of those days has an Introit of its own.

again to God the Holy Ghost. The introduction of these words dates from the earliest times; the Church retains them in their Greek form to show that she 'admits no distinction of nation or province,' and she thus 'manifests her sense of relationship with the Eastern Church and her continual yearning after the blessings of peace.'[1]

The *Kyrie* is followed by the *Gloria in excelsis*, a hymn the first part of which was sung by the angels, the rest has been traditional in the Church from primitive times,[2] and appears in the Liturgies of St. Chrysostom and St. Basil. It is omitted on all ferias (or weekdays) except in Easter week, on Sundays in Advent and Lent, also in Masses for the dead, in votive Masses, excepting those of the angels, or of the Blessed Virgin if said on Saturday; and on occasions of humiliation and mourning.

After the *Gloria* the priest, turning to the people, says, *Dominus vobiscum*, 'The Lord be with you,' and the acolyte (or server), answering in their name, says: *Et cum spiritu tuo*, 'And with your spirit.' The Church signifies by this exchange of salutations, which occurs seven times in the course of Mass, that she wishes to associate the faithful assisting at Mass with God's minister, so that they may be one in prayer and intention in the great act in which he is engaged.[3] This salutation, which is used in several places in Scripture, dates from, probably, Apostolic times.

The priest then reads the Collects out of the Missal on the Epistle side. These are special prayers for the needs of the Church or of the country; the principal one being proper to the Sunday or feast on which it is said. The present order in which they are said dates from St. Gregory

[1] *Ceremonies of the Mass*, p. 18.

[2] Some believe a portion of it was composed by St. Hilary, *ibid.* p. 19.

[3] The priest ceases, it will be observed, to address the people during the solemn parts of the Mass.

the Great. They vary in number from three to seven. The Collects are followed by the Epistle, which is most often taken from the New Testament. 'It is commonly thought to have been St. Jerome who arranged the Epistles in the Mass according to the present order.'[1] The acolyte answers *Deo gratias* at the end, to signify the gratitude that is due to 'the unspeakable gift of God' in His Holy Scriptures.

The Epistle is followed by the Gradual,[2] which is ordinarily taken from the Psalms. The Alleluia is said twice after the Gradual in Paschal time. In all ferias, and from Septuagesima till Easter, the Alleluia is omitted, and a Tract or passage from the Psalms is substituted. In special seasons, such as Easter, when the *Victimæ Paschali* is recited—also in the Octaves of Pentecost and of Corpus Christi—a Sequence or hymn is said at this time; also at Masses for the dead when the *Dies iræ* is said or sung. Before saying the Gospel the priest goes to the middle of the altar, and, bending over it, says the prayer *Munda cor meum*, in which he begs the Almighty, who cleansed the lips of the Prophet Isaiah with a burning coal, so to cleanse his heart and his lips that they may worthily announce the Gospel. He then reads the Gospel of the day, after which he kisses the book to denote his reverence for the Word of God. When a sermon is preached it follows the reading of the Gospel. Mass is resumed with the *Credo* on all Sundays, feasts of our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles, and Doctors of the Church.

The second part of the Mass begins with the priest unveiling the chalice, after which he takes the paten in his hands and offers to the Almighty 'the immaculate host,' which, by the words of consecration, is to be changed into the Body of our Lord. He then takes the chalice to the

[1] Oakeley's *Ceremonies of the Mass*, p. 24.

[2] From *gradus*, steps, as it was formerly sung at High Mass from the steps of the altar.

Epistle side, pours wine into it and adds a few drops of water (which he has previously blessed), and again prays over it. The practice of adding water to the wine is mentioned by St. Justin and St. Cyril, and dates from the earliest age of the Church; it is symbolical of the opening of our Lord's side by the spear, whence there issued blood and water.[1] The priest then moves back to the middle of the altar and offers the chalice, in the same way as he had previously done the paten containing the host. After this he returns to the Epistle side, and while the acolyte pours water over his fingers to denote the purity of soul which he requires in order worthily to offer up the adorable sacrifice he says a portion of the twenty-fifth psalm.

Again he prays in front of the altar, and then, turning to the people, he says: *Orate, fratres*—'Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty.' To which the acolyte answers in the name of all: 'May our Lord receive this sacrifice from thy hands, to the praise and glory of His Name, to our profit and to that of all His holy Church.' The use of the Preface which follows comes to us from the time of the Apostles, and is found in all the ancient liturgies, as well as in the writings of St. Clement. There are eleven different Prefaces, appropriate to different times of the year; all of these, and their appropriate seasons, will be found in the Missal.

The priest begins the Preface by inviting the people to lift up their hearts to God: *Sursum corda.* He then goes on to give thanks to God for all His divine mercies and benefits. 'It is meet and just,' he says, that—as the holy psalmist declares 'I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall be always in my mouth'—so 'we should always and everywhere give thanks to Thee,' uniting with the Mother of God and all the blessed choirs of angels and

[1] The wine and water also denote the two Sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Baptism.

archangels, of thrones, and powers and dominations, in praising and blessing His holy Name. At the *Sanctus*—with which the Preface terminates—a bell is rung in order to intimate to the people that the Canon is about to commence.

The Canon[1] *of the Mass*

With the Canon what is called the Action of the Mass commences. The Canon 'is probably the work of no single author, but a kind of "symbolum" or contribution from many holy Popes and Doctors, none of them later than St. Gregory the Great, but extending back to the times of the Apostles, and incorporating the tradition of their words, and those of our blessed Lord Himself, as the Council of Trent has it.'[2] We learn from internal evidence that it was composed previous to the fourth century, as only the names of the Apostles and Martyrs appear in it, the cultus of the Confessors not having commenced till that date. 'The narrative introductory to the consecration, and the form of consecration of the chalice, certainly contain Apostolical traditions of the actions and words of our Blessed Saviour, who (as we know from St. John xxi. 25 and Acts xx. 35) said and did many things which are not in the Holy Gospels. As to the additions of holy Popes, it is believed that St. Leo added the words *Sanctum Sacrificium, immaculatam Hostiam* at the end of the prayer following the consecration. And St. Gregory the Great is said to have introduced the words before the consecration "*diesque nostros . . . grege numerari*"; also to have added the names of the holy virgins and martyrs, SS. Agatha, Lucia, Agnes, Cæcilia, and Anastasia, to the second commemoration of saints. After St. Gregory the Great, as Cardinal Bona considers, nothing was added.[3] It

[1] The word 'Canon' comes from a Greek word signifying 'Rule.'

[2] Sess. xxii. c. 4, 'De Sac. Missæ;' *Ceremonies of the Mass*, p. 46.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 47.

will be observed that from the Preface to the Post-Communion the priest no longer turns to the people. He has now entered on the most solemn part of the Mass, and it is only to God and to the unseen heavenly host that he addresses himself. He prays also in silence; with Anna, the mother of Samuel, 'he speaks to God in his heart and only moves his lips.'[1] The priest at the beginning of the Canon extends his hands, at the same time lifting them above the altar, whilst he raises his eyes to the crucifix; he then joins them and bows profoundly before the altar. He then says the prayers before the Consecration, which will be found in the Missal. These prayers are followed by the memento for the living—so called from the first word 'Remember'—in which the priest mentions specially the names of the person or persons, or intentions, for which the sacrifice is offered up. He then proceeds to the commemoration of the saints in glory. 'Communicating and venerating the memory in the first place of the glorious and ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of God, even our Lord Jesus Christ,' and after her the twelve Apostles, and twelve martyrs of the early Church. This prayer is followed by the Oblation, the last three petitions of which were added by St. Gregory the Great,[2] the beginning coming from older liturgies. The priest whilst saying this prayer spreads his hands over the *oblata* (or materials of the sacrifice), signifying his submission to the Divine power; thus his palms are laid over the offering, the palms of the priest being specially anointed at his ordination in order that 'all which they bless may be blessed.' At the same time the acolyte rings a bell, in order to let the people know that the Consecration is at hand. During the prayer which follows (which is of the greatest antiquity, and has been commented on by St. Augustine) the priest makes five crosses on the *oblata* to signify the intimate union between the sacrifice about to be offered and that of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

[1] 1 Kings i. 13; *Ceremonies of the Mass*, p. 37. [2] *Ibid.* p. 55.

After pronouncing the words of consecration over the Host, the priest kneels down and adores Jesus Christ now present on the altar, and then rising he holds It up to be adored by the people. Again—having placed the Host on the corporal—he kneels and adores It, the acolyte meanwhile ringing the bell three times.[1]

After the consecration of the Host the priest uncovers the chalice, which has been covered by the pall since the Offertory, and, pronouncing over it the words ordained by Jesus Christ, changes the wine into His Precious Blood. Again the bell is rung three times.

The priest, having adored the Sacred Species, proceeds to say the prayer appointed at this place, in which he offers up the immaculate Host and the Chalice of Salvation to the Most High, imploring of Him to look upon it with a propitious countenance, as He did on the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech. These three sacrifices are specially mentioned, for, 'besides the connection of type and antitype between all the ancient sacrifices and the great Sacrifice of the New Law, there is something in each of the three sacrifices specified in the Canon of the Mass which bears with an especial propriety upon the great Christian Sacrifice; for as Abel offered the firstlings of his flock (Gen. iv. 4) and thence gained a singular respect to his sacrifice, so Christ, our Passover, is the "First-born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29), and Abel's blood shed by his brother represents Christ slain through the malice of the Jews, and shedding His precious Blood for the sins of the world. The sacrifice of Isaac was a type of the great sacrifice on the Cross; it is probable even that Abraham had a foresight of it, since our Lord says of him, "Abraham rejoiced that he might see My day; he saw it, and was glad." And, lastly,

[1] The Host is elevated by the priest in order to be seen by the people. They should, therefore, having bowed their heads at the first bell, look up and adore It.

the sacrifice of Melchisedech was a direct type of the Eucharistic Sacrifice; for, being a priest of the Most High God, he "brought forth bread and wine."'[1]

The prayers after the Consecration are followed by the memento for the dead, in which, as in the case of the memento for the living, the priest intercedes (by name and in general) for the souls 'who have gone before us in the sign of faith and sleep in the sleep of peace.' After this prayer the priest breaks the silence by saying aloud, *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*: 'Vouchsafe to give to us sinners, Thy servants hoping in the multitude of Thy mercies, some part and fellowship with Thy most holy Apostles and martyrs,' &c. In the list which follows we see various orders of saints represented (as remarked by Cardinal Bona).[2] Thus St. Stephen was a deacon; St. Matthias and St. Barnabas apostles; St. Ignatius a bishop; St. Alexander a Pope; St. Marcellinus a priest; SS. Felicitas and Perpetua were married, and the rest virgins.'[3]

After the prayer which follows this one, the priest elevates the sacred Host and chalice slightly from the altar; in some countries the bell is rung also. He then says aloud *Per omnia sæcula sæculorum*, after which he recites the Lord's Prayer. There is an especial meaning in the recital of the Lord's Prayer at this period of the Mass. Jesus Christ is Himself truly present under the Sacramental species on the altar; the priest therefore in saying it associates himself with Christ, the Divine High-Priest and Victim, the faithful also joining in by means of the acolyte and begging with him, at the end, to be delivered from evil. Continuing, as it were, the last petition, the priest says, 'Deliver us, we beseech Thee, from all evils, present, past, and future,' holding at the same time the paten in his hand; and when he has got to the words (see Missal) 'Grant, of Thy goodness, peace in our days,' he

[1] Gen. xiv. 18; *Ceremonies of the Mass*, p. 62.

[2] *Rer. Lit.* lib. ii. c. 14, n. 5; *ibid.* p. 67.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 67.

crosses himself with it, then kisses it and places it reverently under the Host. Then, having uncovered the chalice, and adored the Precious Blood, he concludes the prayer, above-mentioned, with the words 'Through Christ our Lord,' at the same time breaking the Host into two parts; one half of which he lays on the paten, and taking a small fragment of the other half, he makes three crosses over the chalice with It and drops It into the chalice. This breaking of the Sacred Host, though differing in the number of the fragments—the Greeks having four, and the liturgy of St. James only two—occurs in all ancient liturgies and dates from Apostolic times. It was of divine institution, as the Evangelists tell us that our Lord 'brake the bread.' And again at Emmaus we are told that 'He took bread, and blessed and brake it.'[1] This ceremony is followed by the *Agnus Dei*. It is said three times by the priest 'in honour of the Holy Trinity,' who 'sent forth the Lamb, the Ruler of the earth.'[2] This petition for peace, and the prayer which follows it, reminding our Divine Saviour of the peace He promised His disciples, have a special significance, 'because by the union of the two species in the chalice at the *Pax Domini* is mystically represented the reunion of the Sacred Body and Blood of our Lord in His glorious Resurrection, the first fruits of which were bestowed in the gift of peace to His disciples.'[3]

After saying these prayers the priest first, kneeling, adores our Lord, for, as St. Augustine says, 'none doth eat the flesh of Christ till he have first adored,' and then, after repeating a verse from the psalm (cxv. 5–13), he says aloud, '*Domine, non sum dignus*,' the rest of the verse in silence, after which he receives the Body of our Lord. He then uncovers the chalice and, kneeling, adores the Precious Blood, afterwards receiving it. If any present themselves at the altar-rails in order to receive Holy Communion, the priest administers the Blessed Sacrament to them. If not, he proceeds to the

[1] *Ibid.* p. 73. [2] *Ibid.* p. 76. [3] *Ibid.* p. 77.

ablutions; that is, in case any drop of the Precious Blood should remain in the chalice, or any particles of the sacred Host adhere to his fingers, wine and water are poured over them, so that all may be consumed. Having covered the chalice, the priest turns to the Epistle side, where he says the Post-Communion, and Collects proper for the day.

On Sundays on which the feast of a saint is kept, or in the Lenten season when a feast occurs (each day in Lent having a Mass proper of the day), the postponed Gospel is said at the end of the Mass; the Missal, therefore, is left open by the priest, and the acolyte moves it to the Gospel side of the altar. The priest then, turning to the people, says, '*Ite, missa est,*'[1] a form of dismissal; to which the faithful answer by means of the acolyte, '*Deo gratias.*' This announcement and its answer are used in the sense of the angel's words to the Apostles after our Lord's Resurrection when he said, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking up to heaven?' (Acts i. 11) as if to say: 'The time of contemplation is over; that of action has begun.' So, 'adoring, they went back to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were always in the Temple, praising and blessing God' (Luke xxiv. 53).[2] The priest then turns to the altar, recites a prayer, kisses the altar stone, and, turning to the people, blesses[3] them and says the last Gospel, with which the Holy Sacrifice is concluded.[4]

High Mass differs but in matters ceremonial from Low Mass; the essentials of divine sacrifice being the same in both. Still we must never forget that although the Church, in her maternal solicitude for the souls of men, multiplies her Low

[1] In the Lenten season, and on all days when the *Gloria* is not said, the priest substitutes the *Benedicamus Domino* (which he says turned towards the altar) for the *Ite, missa est.* See explanation p. 188.

[2] *Ceremonies of the Mass*, p. 94.

[3] This blessing is omitted in Masses for the dead.

[4] See Appendix No. IV.

Masses in these latter days for the sake of the graces bestowed by their means, yet it is her earnest desire to offer up to her Divine Spouse this sacrifice of unspeakable greatness with the utmost pomp and magnificence. We know that in the primitive ages—even in times of persecution, when the Church had to seek refuge in the catacombs —the Holy Sacrifice was offered up by the Bishop, the priests and deacons assisting only, that incense was used, and the Mass was in all probability chanted. This ardent desire of the Church is fulfilled in the cathedrals of Catholic countries, and in many religious houses, where High Mass is daily offered up. Let this be a motive to us to assist at High Mass at least on Sundays and holidays of obligation. Many are accustomed to say that they have more devotion to hearing two Low Masses on Sundays than one High Mass; but in professing these opinions are they aware that they are cutting themselves off from the traditions of the past, as regards High Mass, and running counter to the acknowledged opinions of ascetical writers on this subject?

ON CONFESSION

The Fathers and Doctors of the Church have ever seen in the hideous disfigurement and pangs of leprosy, upon which so many of our Divine Saviour's miracles were worked, a type of the soul of man disfigured by mortal sin. They have also drawn our attention to another striking fact; and that is, that whilst on all other occasions our Lord exercised Himself His miraculous powers, by His divine word or touch, or the application of the clay, which having made Himself, He spread on the eyelids of the blind man, in the case of the ten lepers, 'as it behoved Him to fulfil all justice,' He sent them to show themselves to the priests; 'and it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean.'

In our Lord's institution of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist we see a parallel case to His procedure with regard to the Sacrament of Penance. In the first place He worked the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, then explained the meaning—eliciting Simon's act of faith and the rejection of it by the carnal-minded Jews—and finally, at the Last Supper, conferred on His Apostles the power of consecration in the words 'Do this in commemoration of Me.' In the same way Jesus Christ first initiates His disciples into the mystery of this great Sacrament under the guise of the leprosy which was cured whilst going to visit the priests. He then prepared them still further for the exercise of a priestly ministry by His promise to the

man sick of the palsy: 'Be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee'; with the result that the Scribes and Pharisees objected: 'How can man forgive sins?' And finally gave them the power of administering the Sacrament, when, after His glorious resurrection from the dead, He breathed upon them, and said to them: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained.'

These words of our Divine Lord's—words He Himself has described as 'spirit and life'—were never for an instant allowed to become a dead-letter in His Church. And so we find St. James bidding his disciples 'confess your sins one to another.' And St. John Chrysostom says in this the priests of the Gospel excel those of the Jewish Church, that whereas Jewish priests could merely declare a man clean of leprosy, the Christian priests 'have received power,' not with regard to the leprosy of the body, but 'the impurity of the soul,' a power which consists not in declaring that the uncleanness is removed, but in actually 'removing it entirely.'[1] He proves this sacerdotal power by an express appeal to the words of St. John which we have quoted above.

The Church, then, from the beginning claimed the power, and exercised it, of curing the hidden maladies of the soul in obedience to our Lord's words, and though frequent confession for venial sins was not the custom among Christians in primitive times, we but learn from this that the Church adapts her discipline to the wants of the age, ever developing with fresh zeal for the salxation of souls the sacred deposit of faith confided to the Apostles.

We who live in degenerate days, when penance is rare, and where fervour such as that of the primitive Christians —who had a martyr's crown ever before their eyes—is altogether exceptional, may well be grateful to the goodness

[1] *De Sacerdot.* iii. 5, 6; *Cath. Dictionary*, p. 698.

of God in giving us a means of sanctification in this spiritual Pool of Siloe where all who will may 'wash and be clean.'

But, though these salutary waters of penance are essentially healing ones, we must not expect that the approach to this life-giving Sacrament is unattended with feelings painful to human nature. In the first place, we must keep ever before our minds that this is essentially the Sacrament of *Penance*. We have offended God by our sins; shall we shrink from the shame it costs us to confess to man the sins we have committed without shame in the sight of God?

Faber, in his 'Spiritual Conferences,' says: 'We go to confession every week, and we are what we are!'

His explanation of this enigma is that we go to confession 'not through any desire to be more closely united to God or to be more thoroughly washed from our iniquities, but because it is our time to go; also because it is simply part of our preparation for Communion. Of course we know that it is a Sacrament by itself; but we do not know it with an energetic practical knowledge.'

Another reason he gives is that confession is used by many merely for the purpose of direction. 'Experience shows that there are few things more difficult to implant in converts than a real faith in confession as a Sacrament, and a grave, humble advertence to the Sacramental character of the action in which they are engaged. Self is the centre, and not God.' He concludes by saying: 'The conclusion seems to be that we do not go to confession looking simply, and steadfastly, and exclusively to God.'[1]

There is yet another reason, we venture to think, which explains the unsatisfactoriness of our confessions, and the small progress we make in piety, and that is the habitual carelessness of our daily examinations of conscience.

The practice of a daily examination of conscience is such an important one that some ascetical writers go so far as to

[1] *Spiritual Conferences*, pp. 250, 270.

say all true progress depends upon it. For it is in realising our falls that we can take measures for avoiding them in the future; and without a daily examination our confessions must be necessarily imperfect ones. Some go so far as to call it the very backbone of our interior life, and say that without it we are but beating the air, or like a boat drifting before the wind without rudder or compass.

The reason for these vigorous denunciations is obvious. If we do not examine our consciences regularly and systematically, we commit numberless venial sins without even recognizing them as offences against God. It is these sins of which we are barely conscious, and therefore of which we never repent, that interpose as a veil between our souls and God, intercepting the graces He is ever desirous of bestowing upon us, and rendering us incapable of hearing those whispers of the Holy Ghost on which our advancement in the interior life mainly depends.

All Catholics are aware that there is no obligation to confess any sins except those which are grave or mortal. But all persons who try to lead a pious and spiritual life make a practice of confessing even their lesser faults, which are called 'venial'; at least, such as are deliberate, and such as arise from habits which are dangerous. Venial sins need not be confessed singly and individually: they may be expressed under general terms; but to know our state in regard to such sins, and to expose it in the tribunal of confession, is extremely useful—nay, almost necessary—for all who would love God with purity and detachment.

To neglect one's daily examination of conscience is to increase tenfold the difficulty of making a useful confession

A man preparing for confession after an absence of a week or a fortnight, or more, from the confessional, who has omitted or slurred over his daily examen, is, in comparison with one who has performed that duty as it should

be done, like a man groping in the dark, while the other is walking straight onward in broad daylight.

This is not only due to the natural cause of an imperfect memory, which, unless in the case of some special sin, with difficulty recalls the number and detail of sins hardly noticed at the time and completely forgotten a week afterwards, but also because our knowledge and perception of sin become more acute from constantly (or once at least daily) acknowledging and asking forgiveness for them before God.

But, to be really effectual, an examination of conscience should be particular as well as general. A general examination may be compared to an army firing at the enemy all down the line; a bullet may now and then hit a man but not much execution is done. And so a general examen which consists of a cursory glance over the day's performance is often prolific in distractions and leads to small result.

A particular examen is directed to one special sin, to which we know we are prone. The attention of the soul is concentrated on that sin. In the morning we are advised to make special resolutions about it; if possible to be careful about proximate occasions of committing it; and finally in the evening to examine how far we have been successful in keeping our resolutions, and in avoiding the sin in question. Spiritual writers have much to say about the kind of sin which we should single out for an attack. St. Ignatius says we should begin by those which are most trying to our neighbours. We have all, or nearly all, got a predominant passion, and it is on this enemy of our soul's salvation, as being not only a sin itself, but probably the cause of most of the other sins we commit, that we should concentrate our attention. Though it is the rarest thing in the world not to have some sin to which we are more inclined than any other, into which we fall most frequently, and which is so bound up in our character and so part of ourselves that probably our friends would be aware of a perceptible change in us should

we be so fortunate as finally to conquer it, yet nothing is more common than to find people who are ignorant in what this sin consists.

There are several ways, we are told, of discovering our predominant passion. One is to look out for the defect which we most dislike having attributed to us. If, for instance, some one accuses us of pride, or an overbearing temper, or any other defect, and we feel annoyed and strongly inclined to defend ourselves, we may consider it a very strong proof that our predominant passion has been hit upon. We have only to contrast this feeling with the calmness with which we should take similar accusation upon points in which we inwardly know ourselves to be less open to criticism. Another strong symptom is that it is the subject to which our thoughts naturally turn in moments of leisure, or when nothing in particular chances to occupy them.

The general direction of our thoughts has much to do with the current of our lives, and consequently with the bent of our predominant passion. It is on this account that the Church requires from us as much vigilance with regard to sins of thought as to those of word or of deed, and our Lord warns us in very explicit terms of some sins of thought, that before they have found outward expression in act they have already been committed in the heart.

One of the objects, therefore, of a particular examen is to let more light into the state of our interior life by a knowledge of our predominant failing, and to enable us to direct an attack upon it from all points, and especially from that inward citadel of the heart from whence it springs. Some writers recommend us to keep a record of our falls with a view to ascertaining if we are making any progress in overcoming our defects, and this plan, tedious though it be, is no doubt a great aid to the attainment of mastery over the evil passions, and the acquisition of purity of heart.

It has been well said that a man may look at his watch

twenty times a day, but the watch goes no better for it; but if he gets into the habit of frequently looking into his soul, to see how it stands before God, his conscience will acquire a sensitiveness to the smallest stain upon it, such as would be impossible to one who has not acquired this habit.

It is the quick forgetfulness of sin after it is committed, and probably much ignorance as to the nature of sin, which causes non-Catholics habitually to wonder what people can find to accuse themselves of every week. Nothing is commoner than to hear it said: 'If I went to confession I should not know what to say. I try not to offend God. What more can He expect of me?'

The Scripture tells us that the just man falls seven times a day, and the holy Psalmist cried out: '*Delicta quis intelligit? Ab occultis meis munda me, et ab alienis parce servo tuo.*' Who shall understand sin? Do we, with our little faith, our limited knowledge, understand what it is to offend our good and merciful and yet unspeakably just God?

We should do our best to learn from the saints, whose union with God gives them insight into the divine secrets denied to ordinary mortals, in what consists the malice of sin. One thing they all teach us, and that is, the nearer we approach to God the deeper the conviction we shall acquire of our utter misery and sinfulness. St. Francis Borgia, we are told, used to spend two hours a day meditating on his unworthiness, and St. Francis of Assisi was a saint of one prayer, and that prayer was: 'Who art thou, my God, and who am I? Thou art the Lord God of heaven and earth, and I am a base worm.' One of the many ways in which the saints show their consciousness of sin is the great use they make of the tribunal of penance.

St. Charles Borromeo and St. Philip Neri were in the habit of going to confession twice a week and even oftener. No doubt the sins of which they accused themselves were indeliberate, and what we, with our smaller knowledge and

weaker faith, should consider imperfections rather than breaches of the law; but that even these involuntary faults are displeasing to God we cannot doubt, nor that the true servant of God can say in this life what we shall all, we trust, say hereafter: 'With Thee is the Fountain of Life; and in Thy Light we shall see Light.'

If the saints teach us by their humble confessions and profound contrition what we should think of involuntary sins, what shall we learn from them about those deliberate offences against God which we are accustomed to think of under the general category of little sins?

St. Teresa is aghast at the idea that we should call any sin trifling when we reflect on the Divine Majesty against which it is committed, and the extent of our indebtedness to Him. 'May God deliver us,' she exclaims, 'from perfectly wilful sin, however small it may be. For I do not understand how we can have such daring as to act in opposition to so great a Lord, even though it be in a small matter; and all the more so, since any such act of ours can never be really so little a matter, considering that it is an offence committed against so powerful a Lord, whom we believe to be actually looking at us while we are engaged in offending Him. Indeed this seems to me to be a thoroughly premeditated sin, just as if one was to say, "Lord, although this sin is displeasing to You, nevertheless I will commit it. I already know that You are a witness of my act and disapprove of it. I am thoroughly aware of all this; but at the same time I prefer to follow my own fancy and passion rather than Your will." Now in a matter of this kind how can anything be considered little? To me such a sin appears by no means little, but great, and even very great.'[1]

Without that fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom we shall never make any progress in piety, and thus St. Teresa goes on to say: 'Reflect, my sisters, for God's

[1] St. Teresa, *Pater Noster*, p. 339.

sake, that if you wish to acquire this fear of God, it is of the utmost importance that you understand what a grievous thing it is to offend God, and that you constantly meditate upon this, seeing that the life of our souls will depend on it.' [1]

The evils from which we suffer are deep rooted; they are a very part of our nature. As the soil of the earth, after the fall of Adam, brought forth briers and thorns, instead of fruit and sweet-smelling flowers as in the garden prepared by God for man, so our human nature, after having been created to God's image and likeness and constituted in grace, was altogether despoiled of its pristine beauty and innocence, so that it required a mighty remedy—no less than the Blood of the Son of God—to restore it to the Divine favour and give it back the place which it had forfeited by sin.

But though the death of our Blessed Redeemer has opened the gates of heaven to believers, human nature has never recovered, nor ever will recover, the wound it received in Adam's fall; but it is now no longer alone. Man has been promised the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, but it is a victory promised only to those who fight the good fight, who deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Him. 'For the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent bear it away.'

'Let us reflect, then, how true it is that we are all weak and infirm, and covered over with the wounds of sin, both because we have inherited a corrupt nature from our fathers, and also because we ourselves, by our sins and evil habits in the past, have weakened ourselves still more, and have wounded ourselves from head to foot.

'Let us therefore present ourselves in this condition before this Heavenly Physician, and beseech Him not to allow us to fall into temptation, but to sustain us with His powerful hand, and not to leave us without His care and assistance. For we are to consider the blindness of our understanding,

[1] *Ibid.* p. 340.

the corruption of our will, which is so prone to follow its own inclinations and to indulge in self-esteem; the forgetfulness of our memory with regard to God's favours; the freedom of our tongue in idle speech, the levity of our heart and its inconstancy in yielding to foolish thoughts, and in not persevering in good resolutions, and in general its vainglory in every good work, and its want of interior recollection.'[1]

St. Teresa puts our weakness, and the maladies with which our souls are afflicted, in the plainest terms, but it is not in order to discourage us. It is only that we may with the more entire faith and self-abandonment take refuge in Him whom she loves to call the adorable Physician of our souls.

'O Heavenly Physician,' she cries out, 'who . . . in name only resemblest the physicians of this world! You pay your visits without waiting to be summoned, and you come to the poor more readily than to the rich. You cure all by visiting them personally, and all that you expect in return is that the sick man should candidly acknowledge his infirmities and should have need of Your services. You facilitate the recovery of the patient, however grave may be his malady, and you promise them that if they give one sign of repentance they shall be healed.

'There was in the midst of Paradise a spring so abundant that it spread out into four very great rivers which watered the entire land. And so, in like manner, from the fountain of that love which burned in the Saviour's heart, we see flowing those five streams of blood which issued from His sacred feet, hands, and side to heal our infirmities. How many sick persons die through want of a physician, or through not having money wherewith to purchase the medicine necessary for their cure! But in the case of the Heavenly Physician no such danger exists; for He offers His services readily, and comes to His patients laden with medi-

[1] St. Teresa, *Pater Noster*, p. 297.

cines to heal their every disease. . . . It only remains, then, for us to make known to Him our wounds and infirmities, and to lay open our hearts before Him in all sincerity.' [1]

St. Teresa in the above exhortation gives us a most practical instruction for all the dispositions we require in order to make a good confession.

She represents to us this loving and merciful Physician of our souls, who is not only so desirous of restoring us to health that He asks no reward for His services, but He is willing to give us, if we ask it of Him, the only stipulation for our cure which He requires, and that is that we humbly acknowledge our miseries and infirmities, and our need of Him who alone can cure us.

So ready is He to grant us His gracious forgiveness that no sooner does He see (in response to His own grace and inspiration) a true sorrow in our hearts for having offended Him, founded on the motive of pure love, than at once we are received again into His love and friendship, and even before we have entered the tribunal of penance it might be said of us as of the ten lepers: 'And it came to pass as they went they were made clean.' We are forgiven indeed, but this true sorrow for sin in the breast of the child of God's Church must necessarily be accompanied with the intention of obeying the Divine ordinance, and seeking, by means of confession and priestly absolution, the ratification of the forgiveness of which he has already received the consoling assurance in his heart.

The choice of a confessor is one of considerable importance, especially to those who have not long been admitted into the Church. St. Teresa has a great deal of solid advice to give us on this subject. She tells us if we should hesitate between two confessors, one of whom we look upon as the holier of the two, whilst the other is the cleverer and the more learned, to choose the latter; for, she says, a stupid man,

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 298–9.

even though he be pious, may make many mistakes in the direction of souls which a cleverer one would avoid.

Probably, however, our choice in this matter is more often guided by circumstances, the parish we are living in, and so forth, than for any other reason, and we may always rely with perfect confidence on any confessor approved of by our bishop.

Unless for special advice and direction, one confessor for all practical purposes is as good as another, and we cannot too strongly deprecate the misguided sentiment of those who think they can only go to confession to one priest. We may naturally cling to the ministrations of one who has been instrumental in our conversion, or has helped us in spiritual difficulties; but with a Catholic the idea of the *man* or friend is entirely sunk in the *Priest*, and from the moment we enter the confessional it is only in that light we should see him.

The first and most important part of our preparation for confession should be to put ourselves in the presence of God, and implore of Him help and guidance to make a good confession.

If, as the Scriptures say, we cannot 'say "The Lord Jesus" without the Holy Ghost,' how shall we be able to approach this holy sacrament, where we require so much light to see our sins, sorrow to bewail them, and strength of mind to confess them, without asking the same Holy Spirit to assist us in our preparation? One thing we may be sure of, and that is that God is not only willing but longing to give us those graces which we ask of Him, so we may go with great confidence to the throne of mercy. Confidence is a virtue which we are specially called upon to exercise, and therefore which we should ask particularly of God for the right making of our confession. For if we look at our past lives, our repeated falls, and even the technical difficulty—felt so strongly by some—of expressing themselves so as to be perfectly understood by their confessor, we shall see how much need we have

of a holy confidence which will save us from the havoc of scruples, or temptations to despondency.

By scruples in this sense we do not mean an excess of conscientious care in matters relating to the confession of our sins; we mean the mental disease which has been defined in theology to be 'a vain fear of sin where there is no reason or reasonable ground for suspecting sin.'[1] Faber tells us that scruples may come from God, the devil, or ourselves: that is, the human spirit; and to these last the body may contribute as well as the soul.

God, he explains, can never be the cause of them, but He may permit them as a trial for various reasons: *e.g.* to detach a soul from leaning too much on spiritual consolations, to cleanse us from past faults, and to give an insight into what those faults are, so that (in the case of superiors or directors) they may be able to deal with these defects when they come across them in souls committed to their care. The devil is the cause of them, because, though not sinful in themselves, they lead to sin, and they cause confused ideas about sin, and produce darkness in the soul, which impedes its progress in virtue.

Scruples arise from our own soul, he says, among other reasons, where they have the effect of interfering in our judgment in times of temptation, so that we are not able to distinguish between temptation and consent. Another cause is 'an excessive fear of God's justice or a distrust of His mercy.' Pride, obstinacy, and an indiscreet austerity which shows itself in avoiding the company of others, as if perfection consisted in being morose, are all caused by the human spirit, otherwise our own souls.

The remedies he suggests are prayer, and a filial devotion to our Lady. 'We must avoid idleness and nerve ourselves to bodily mortification. . . . We must never reflect on our own scruples, but act as we see other good people act,

[1] *Growth in Holiness*, p. 300.

remembering that God is our Father and the Church a benignant Mother. The precepts of God and the Church, says St. Antoninus, were not meant to take away from us all spiritual sweetness, as the excessive interpretations of the scrupulous and the timid would make them do, neither did the Church ever intend by her commands to oblige any man to drive himself mad.' The last remedy, which he says 'is as near to being a specific as anything can be called a specific which does not cure an incurable disease, but which restores to some kind of valetudinarian spiritual existence, is blind obedience to one's spiritual director.'[1]

To remember, therefore, that God is our Father, and to come to confession in the spirit of the prodigal son; to say in our hearts, 'I will arise and go to my Father, and say to Him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am not worthy to be called Thy son,' is to approach this holy sacrament in the sentiments best adapted to its greatness and our unworthiness. In our confession as well as in our preparation, we should keep this consoling thought in mind: that if we do our best—God helping—we may trust to Him with absolute confidence that all is well, and this in spite of many shortcomings.

One thing we must ever make sure of, and that is that we possess in our hearts a firm determination, in spite of human respect or false pride, to state our sins such as we believe them to be in the sight of God. If after leaving the confessional we find that notwithstanding a careful examination of conscience, and this determination to confess ourselves of all the sins we are conscious of having committed, a grievous sin has escaped our memory, we may rest satisfied in the consciousness that God has accepted our intention and forgiven us this sin as well; we are bound, however, to accuse ourselves of it in our next confession.

As regards our examination of conscience, theologians

[1] *Growth in Holiness*, pp. 315–7.

say that we are bound to take a reasonable and sufficient care, such as we should take in cases of importance as regards our secular affairs. We should do well, at first especially, to consult one of the ordinary manuals of piety, which will serve to recall to our remembrance sins which we might otherwise be in danger of forgetting. These examinations are either based on the Ten Commandments or on the consideration of our duties to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. If we are in the habit of going weekly to confession we shall probably find the latter all that we require.

Many, no doubt, on first becoming Catholics, will find that they are called upon to consider as sins defects and shortcomings which they have never looked upon in so serious a light before.

This is especially applicable to sins of thought. We will take as an instance sins against charity. A person who is habitually uncharitable will nearly always find that the sins of the *tongue* which he commits have arisen in the first place and been derived from uncharitable thoughts nourished and dwelt upon in the *heart*. 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' To cultivate kind thoughts about people we dislike, to banish from our minds at their first inception rash judgment, critical and severe opinions, even to *forget* ill-natured things we have heard about our so-called friends, is an absolute duty, if we wish to practise that Commandment which our Lord tells us is second only to the one which bids us love Him—namely, that we love our neighbour as ourselves.

Detraction, by which we mean repeating things to the disadvantage of our neighbour which are true, in contra-distinction to calumny, which we understand to refer to things that are false, is a sin very little recognized out of the Church. Theologians give this reason for considering it a sin: they compare it to the sin of theft, as by means of it

we deprive our neighbour of what was his before we took away his character—namely, his good name. But, it may be urged, it was not his; he had already forfeited his right to a good name. The answer is that this is no concern of ours. Because a man is a thief we have no right to rob him. 'Revenge is mine,' we are told, 'and I will repay.' If we have been witness of a man's sin, and it is known to no one but ourselves, we are bound to maintain silence about it, unless valid reasons present themselves for breaking it. The gravity of this sin of detraction depends a great deal on the loss of reputation to the person involved in it; for instance, when it is question of a head of a family, a priest, or any ecclesiastical superior, in which case, as the loss of reputation is more considerable, so is the sin greater.

In examining our consciences we have also to consider the sins we are the cause of in others by our bad example, our careless words, or by any of the many ways in which we may become accessory to other people's sins. We must also remember our sins of omission under this heading: the occasions when we have neglected a helpful word, a kind action, by which sin would have been averted. 'Am I my brother's keeper'? are words which Holy Writ puts into the mouth of a murderer. How many losses of souls have been incurred by omissions for which a similar excuse is made we shall never know this side of the grave.

If we have to exercise a strict scrutiny over our thoughts, words, and actions, before we enter the tribunal of penance, this does not mean that it should be a source of terror or uneasiness to us. God, who has ordained this sacrament of mercy, this plank after baptism, as St. Jerome calls it, whereby we are saved from shipwreck, will also give us grace and strength to benefit by it. There is one cause, as we all know, by which we make a bad and sacrilegious confession: that is when, like Ananias and Sapphira, we tell a lie to the Holy Ghost, and wilfully and knowingly conceal a

mortal sin in confession. When we have had the misfortune to commit this sin we must, if we wish to repair it by a good confession, besides accusing ourselves of the sin we have omitted to mention, also accuse ourselves of having made a bad confession and of all the other sins we have committed since, as till we have made our peace with God on that point the rest of our confession and all succeeding ones are null and void.

This is the principal cause of a sacrilegious confession, but there are others which may result in our making a bad and invalid one. As we are taught in our Catechism, confession, contrition, and absolution are essential to the Sacrament of Penance. Satisfaction, though an integral, is not an essential part of the sacrament. A priest might hear a man's confession on his death-bed without imposing a penance, and the confession would still be valid.

Probably the most ordinary cause of an invalid confession is carelessness in our act of contrition and purpose of amendment. An act of contrition, such as is necessary and sufficient for the Sacrament of Penance, must be a true and sincere sorrow founded upon some supernatural motive; as, for example, because God is infinitely good, and good to us, because our sins have caused the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, or because by them we have exposed ourselves to the punishments of God.

This sorrow must be accompanied with a firm purpose by the grace of God to avoid not only sin, but all occasions which we can foresee are likely to prove dangerous to us. We should go into this subject thoroughly in our preparation, asking God's assistance to provide against our weakness, and to strengthen us in our good resolutions for the future.

If, after a diligent examination of conscience, the penitent finds he has not sufficient matter for confession, in order to excite himself to greater contrition he may accuse himself

of some sins of his past life. This is often done by the advice of the confessor.

In entering the confessional, the penitent should fix his eyes on the crucifix, which always hangs there, and, whilst the priest says the short preparatory prayer, put himself in spirit at the feet of Jesus crucified.

The wording of his confession should be as concise and short as is consistent with clearness, and with the necessity of explaining any circumstance which materially increases the guilt of his sin. He should never mention by name any person under any pretext whatsoever. If after his confession the priest gives him a short exhortation, as is often, but not universally done, he should receive these words of advice as coming to him from God, and do his utmost to act upon them.

Whilst the priest pronounces the words of absolution over him, he should once more make an earnest and heartfelt act of contrition, imploring of our Divine Redeemer to ratify in heaven the sentence His minister pronounces in His name, and by virtue of His command, on earth. At the same time he may most firmly believe that the Precious Blood of our Lord, shed from His five wounds, is being poured over his soul and washing away from it every stain of sin.

The penitent, after confession, should animate his soul to gratitude for the Divine favours he has received, remembering how the loving heart of our Lord was wounded by the ingratitude of the nine lepers who went their way without returning to Him to acknowledge His goodness and give Him praise and thanks for their cure, and how in return for the gratitude of the Samaritan He bade him go in peace, for his sins were forgiven him.

He should also perform the penance imposed upon him by the priest, if possible before leaving the church. The penance, in these days, ordinarily consists of a short prayer a litany, a decade of the Rosary, or a psalm, such as the *De*

profundis or *Miserere*. Though this alone is obligatory, the penitent has to bear in mind that God requires—as we see by the Scriptures and the teaching of the Church—that sin should be expiated by penance, even when its guilt is forgiven. He is therefore recommended to supplement the gentle penance of the Church by the practice of one or more of the three penitential exercises—prayer, fasting, or alms-deeds. Also to accept in a spirit of penance and resignation to the Divine will the sorrows and trials and sufferings of life—learning in this from the pattern for sinners, the good thief, that no better act of humility and submission can be offered to God than to acknowledge that we but receive in our punishments what we deserve for our sins.

What is the special fruit to be gained, it may be asked, by a good confession?

The answer is: Purity of heart.

What that great virtue is, so specially blessed by our Divine Lord—for has He not said: 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God'—we cannot learn better than from the author of 'Spiritual Doctrine': [1]

'Purity of heart consists in having nothing therein which is, in however small a degree, opposed to God and the operation of His grace.

'All the creatures there are in the world, the whole order of nature as well as of grace, and all the leadings of Providence, have been so disposed as to remove from our souls whatever is contrary to God. For never shall we attain unto God until we have corrected, cut off, and destroyed, either in this life or in the next, everything that is contrary to God. . . . We must devote our whole care to the purifying of our heart, because there lies the root of all our evils.

'To be able to conceive how requisite purity of heart is to

[1] Lallemant's *Spiritual Doctrine*, p. 65.

us, it would be necessary fully to comprehend the natural corruption of the human heart. There is in us a very depth of malice, which we do not perceive because we never seriously examine our own interior. If we did, we should find therein a multitude of desires and irregular appetites for the honours, the pleasures, and the comforts of the world unceasingly fermenting in our heart.

'We are so full of false ideas and erroneous judgments, of disorderly affections, passions and malice, that we should stand confounded could we see ourselves such as we are. Let us imagine ourselves a muddy well from which water is continually being drawn: at first what comes up is scarcely anything but mud, but by dint of drawing the well is gradually cleansed and the water becomes purer, until at length it is as clear as crystal. In like manner, by labouring incessantly to purge our soul, the ground of it becomes gradually cleared and God manifests His presence by powerful and marvellous effects which He works in the soul, and through it, for the good of others. When the heart is thoroughly cleansed, God fills the soul and all its powers, the memory, the understanding, and the will, with His holy presence and love.

'Thus purity of heart leads to union with God, and no one ordinarily attains thereto by other means.'

ON HOLY COMMUNION

Our Divine Saviour, in the last words He spoke to His disciples before His Passion, has given us the complete and only explanation of the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. He said: 'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you'; and as the Father loved Him with an infinite love, such is the love which Jesus bears us in the Sacrament of the Altar.

The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, therefore, though it is the Sacrament of unity and of thanksgiving (as its name implies), is more especially the Sacrament of love.

God has made us for Himself. He has implanted in our very natures a longing which He alone can satisfy. The pleasures of the world, human love, beauty, art—all these things and countless others are insufficient to fill that immense void. After enjoying all, the soul of man remains unsatisfied. Like the Preacher in Ecclesiastes, he may refuse himself nothing that his soul desires, nor withhold his senses from enjoying every pleasure, and yet in the end he must also acknowledge that the things wherein he laboured were in vain, and that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and nothing is lasting under the sun. Has God, then, given us longings only to tantalize us—desires which are never to be fulfilled? No. He has created us for an eternity of happiness which we are to share for ever with Him; this is the reason that nothing earthly will ever satisfy us. He has,

moreover, made our hearts for Himself, so that they will never rest, as St. Augustine tells us, till they rest in Him. The holy books of the Old Law are full of traces of this spirit of restless desire and longing. The Spirit of love, the Paraclete, whose special mission has ever been to educate the mind of man to a knowledge of his sublime vocation, was ever whispering in mysterious language of the glories that were in store for him. But these things were still in the future; Jesus had not yet come to reconcile sinners to His Father. The prophets of the Old Law, even the royal David—in whom the Fathers have seen the figure of Christ Himself—saw but in passing glimpses, and by types and figures, the riches of the treasure of mercy God had in store for the children redeemed by the Precious Blood of His Son.

But this language, however veiled and allegorical, pointed ever to a mysterious Presence, a consoling gift hitherto denied to man.

Thus the Psalmist cries: 'As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God! My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God: When shall I come and appear before the face of God? My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: Where is thy God? These things I remembered, and poured out my soul in me: for I shall go over into the place of the wonderful Tabernacle, even to the House of God, with the voice of joy and praise, the noise of one that is feasting. Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou disquiet me? Hope in God, for I will still praise Him, the salvation of my countenance, and my God.' He has not yet come, the root of Jesse has not blossomed. Bethlehem, the House of Bread, has not yet received its Divine Inmate, and so the soul of man laments. But now and then the veil is lifted, and the inspired prophet, speaking in the name of the Lord, brings comfort to Israel: 'I will move all nations, and the desired of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house

with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. Great shall be the glory of this last House more than of the first, saith the Lord of hosts, and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.' (Ag. ii. 8, 10.) 'My eyes shall be open and my ears attentive to the prayer of men that shall pray in this Place. For I have chosen and have sanctified this Place, that My Name may be there for ever, and My eyes and My heart may remain there perpetually.' (Paralip. vii. 15–16.)

Again, the holy prophet tells the people of God what awaits them: 'What is the good thing of Him,' he asks, 'and what is His beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins?' (Za. ix. 17); and 'Thou didst feed Thy people with the Food of angels, and gavest them Bread from heaven prepared without labour, having in it all that is delicious.' (Wisdom xvi. 20.)

The 'wonderful Tabernacle,' the Tabernacle of God with man, in which peace—true peace—alone is to be found, where the Heart of Jesus, whose delight is to be with the children of men, has taken up its abode for ever, and where the food set before us is Bread from heaven having in it all that is delicious: these are the words in which the prophets foretold in mystic language the unspeakable gift God had in store for man.

And now let us turn from that twilight, in which 'the Law, having a shadow of the good things to come, had not the very image of the things,' to the dawn of the new day when the types were to be for ever cast aside to give place to the glorious reality, the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

It was in the second year of our Lord's public ministry, a year before He went up to Jerusalem for His sacred Passion and death, that for the first time He propounded to His disciples, and the multitude that followed Him, the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist.

We read in St. John's Gospel that after Jesus had worked

the miracle of curing the paralytic in Jerusalem great numbers followed Him out into the desert, some doubtless in order to hear His divine doctrine, and many to be cured of their diseases; and that Jesus once more had compassion on them, and miraculously multiplied the loaves and fishes, so that all might eat and be filled.

Let us stop here for a moment to contemplate our merciful and loving Saviour. Now, as ever, He is listening to their petitions. To none does He turn a deaf ear; grace is evermore going out of Him and healing all.

But He has another work besides that of healing the ills of the body, and ministering to the physical necessities of man, and that is to cure the hidden and more deeply seated evils of the soul, and to prepare them for the much greater miracle of which the multiplication of the loaves and fishes was but a figure. It was of this miracle He had spoken but a few days before when He said: 'For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things which himself doth; and greater things than these will he show him, that you may wonder.' (John v. 20.) The time had now come to prepare them for this greater miracle which was to be the supreme touchstone of faith, not only for the immediate followers of Christ, but for all others in succeeding generations.

Our Lord, having given food to the multitude, escaped from them, but the Gospel tells us 'they took shipping and came to Capharnaum, seeking Jesus'; and on finding Him they ask: 'Rabbi, when camest thou hither'? Jesus answered them and said: 'Amen, amen, I say to you, you seek me not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you.' (John vi. 24–27.)

Again this 'stiff-necked and unbelieving generation' ask 'for a sign.' Jesus, they demur, had but fed them with common bread, whereas their fathers 'did eat manna in the desert,

as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' To this our Blessed Lord answers that His Father gives the true Bread from heaven, which is Himself; that He is 'the bread of Life; he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.'

Hitherto our Lord has spoken only of His divine doctrine, the true food of the soul; but the time had come for Him to say more, for Him to unfold to them the mystery of the Holy Eucharist.

Moses had indeed given bread from heaven; and this was but a type. Jesus Himself had multiplied the loaves and fishes, and this also was but a type, a shadow of that food which was Himself, and which one day He was to give for the life of the world.

Accordingly Jesus says: 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world. . . For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever.' (John vi. 51–59.)

O great and unutterable gift of God to man! Not satisfied with feeding Thy children on the pure milk of Thy heavenly doctrine, of working miracles to stave off their hunger in the desert, Thou must needs promise them Thyself, Thine own Blood to be their drink, Thine own flesh to be their food. Thy love has forced Thee to such incredible lengths that the Jews—foolish and slow of heart—renounced Thee rather than believe a miracle so stupendous. But we, the children of Thy Church, like Simon, we cling to Thee; we will never part from Thee. 'Thou hast the words of

eternal life.' What passes human comprehension is possible to Thee. For love explains all problems: 'and we have believed and have known that Thou art the Son of the living God.'

Love is the explanation of every difficulty, and faith makes that easy which human nature—the unsupernatural man—revolts from as incomprehensible. 'Two things are very marvellous in this Sacrament' (a holy writer of the twelfth century tells us). 'One is that such things should be done by God; the other is that they should be believed by man. Those who do not believe that they are done by God wonder that they should be believed. But in truth God is the author both of the thing that is believed and of the faith that believes, and *God is equally wonderful in both.*'[1]

A little later, Jesus, in His discourse to His disciples before His Passion, said to them: 'Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend'; and we with great reverence and humility may say daily in our hearts, as often as we receive our Divine Saviour into them: 'O sweet Jesus, no *man* could give greater proof of his love than by dying for him who was the object of it; but Thou, who art God as well as man, hast given a surpassing and infinitely greater proof of Thy love. For in giving us Thy flesh to eat and Thy blood to drink in this august Sacrament Thou dost unite Thyself to our souls in a manner so close and so intimate that none but Thyself could have conceived or devised so great a favour—so unspeakable a gift to man. Truly Thou hast pushed Thy love for us to excess, so that this very proof of Thy love for us has been a trial to faith such as Thy grace alone can enable weak humanity to withstand.' No wonder that before going up to Jerusalem Jesus said to His Apostles: 'With desire I have desired to eat this

[1] Bridgett's *History of the Holy Eucharist*, ii. 320.

Pasch with my disciples,' for in this sacred mystery we see how He fulfilled all the desires of His heart and His promises to men.

In this Divine Presence on our altars, and in our hearts, we see the source of all the holiness of the Church of Christ and its living members since that great Maundy Thursday when the types were for ever swept away to make room for the true Pasch, 'the Lamb that was slain since the foundation of the world.'

It was from this divine Food that the martyrs drew all their strength, the monks and consecrated virgins their perseverance in their holy vocations, the man of the world the grace to fight against the threefold enemy of his salvation—the flesh, the world, and the devil.

In vain would our Divine Lord have come down to save us, have been made man in the stable of Bethlehem, have died for us on the Cross, if He had not left us this Blessed Memorial of His Passion, which, as He has told us, was evermore to show forth His death till He came.

For did He not, to whom all things are known—did He not foresee that the time would come when the world would grow cold, when faith would well-nigh die out, when the memory of His Blessed Passion would be regarded with scepticism or indifference? But wherever the true doctrine of the Holy Eucharist exists, wherever a living, vital devotion to the most adorable Sacrament of the Altar is held, there the love of Jesus for man, the remembrance of His Passion, His Death and Resurrection, is held in the same spirit of love and faith and reverence as it was in the first ages of the Church.

Jesus is hidden beneath the sacramental veils, but 'He is not dead; He speaketh.' He may hide Himself for a while, as He did to try the faith of the Magdalene. But He says but one word, 'Mary,' and behold the soul recognising its Lord cries out with her, '*Rabboni*, Master.'

'Verily,' the inspired prophet cries out, 'Thou art a hidden God, O God our Saviour!'

'This has been God's "*Ecce Homo*" to every tribe and tongue. "Brethren," said St. Aelred to his monks one Christmas night, "we have no such great and evident sign of the birth of Christ as that we daily receive His body and blood at the holy altar, and that He who was once born for us of a Virgin is daily immolated in our sight."'[1]

But besides being the Sacrament of love the Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament of unity.

'God is love; and love must have union, and union makes the united like one another.'[2] And thus, in the discourse our Divine Saviour held with His disciples after the institution of the Blessed Sacrament at the Last Supper, our Lord chiefly insists, not once but many times, on the union which henceforth was to exist between His children, the infant Church, and their Divine Head.

Speaking of these He says: 'And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in me, and I in thee: that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. And the glory which Thou hast given me I have given to them: that they may be one, as we also are one. I in them, and Thou in me.' (John xvii. 20, 23.) Jesus, indeed, in assuming the nature of man, joined Himself to our common humanity; but this union was necessarily incomplete until, as the Fathers of the Church assure us, He united Himself, the mystical Head, to each of His members in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. 'It is on this account,' says Paschasius Radbert, 'that He so rejoiced at the Supper and gives thanks to God His Father for that His desires are at last fulfilled. He desired *before He suffered* to eat the true Passover, in order that, when the

[1] *History of the Holy Eucharist*, ii. 62.
[2] *Liturgical Year: Time after Pentecost*, i. 206.

hour came for Him to deliver Himself up as the price of our ransom, we might already be in Him as one body. And thus, we had to be crucified, and buried, and rise again together with Him.' [1]

Jesus, then, in giving Himself to us in this Divine Sacrament, not only makes Himself one with us but much more, makes us one with Him. The participating of the Body and Blood of Christ has this as its chief work—to change us into Him, 'and in such wise as that being made His body, and having become His members, we may *be* what we receive.' How glorious and consoling is the prospect thus held out to us Christians and members of our Holy Mother the Church! Being one with Him through this most blessed bond—this abiding in Him and He in us—we take possession of the rights He has earned for us, which St. Paul calls 'the participation of the Divine nature.' It is true that we are here in a land of exile, strangers and pilgrims, and the feast with which our Divine Saviour celebrated His nuptials with the soul of man was the three hours' agony, the grievous scourging, the tree of the Cross; but if in this world, with Him our Divine head, we are to have tribulation, we are to take confidence, He tells us, for He has overcome the world.

It is fitting that, being one with Christ through these Divine mysteries, we should suffer with Him, for 'this is the very nature of the Eucharistic banquet, this banquet of mutual *abiding*; a banquet at which man cannot worthily eat of the Bread of Life without his becoming gradually more and more the Bread of Christ, that *one bread* spoken of by the Apostle, which is kneaded up by the Church in the holy mysteries that it may become one with the sacred Flesh of Christ, as St. John Chrysostom so forcibly expresses it, and give growth and strength and unity to the mystical body of Christ. "I am the wheat of Christ," said the holy martyr Ignatius of Antioch; "may I be ground by the teeth of the

[1] *Time after Pentecost*, i. 394.

wild beasts that I may be found to be the pure bread of Christ. . . to be offered in sacrifice to God.'' [1]

United to each other, therefore, and to Him, let us go with great confidence to the holy table which Jesus has prepared for us. The manna which the Israelites received in the desert is but the faintest type of this divine banquet in which we receive the very Body which was immolated for us on the Cross, the very Blood which was shed for us and for all mankind. In the other sacraments, theologians tell us, we receive the different graces we require for our various necessities, and for our state in life, but in this we receive the very Giver of all graces, Jesus Christ our Lord. Not only do we receive Him whole and entire under either species, but we receive, by what is called concomitance, the Soul and Divinity of our Divine Saviour as well. Thus St. Ambrose could appeal in his own day to this belief as an established fact handed down from the time of the Apostles. 'For,' he says, 'the reason why we adore Christ's flesh in the mysteries of the Holy Eucharist, as the Apostles adored it in our Lord when He was on earth, is that Christ is not divided, but one.' [2]

If the Sacrament of the Altar is all this—and how much more!—it is clear that our preparation for it should be a chief feature in our lives. Preparation for Holy Communion should consist in removing those obstacles which we perceive in ourselves to our union with Christ. The first and greatest obstacle is sin. St. Paul says: 'Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that chalice.' We must begin our preparation, therefore, by a good and fervent confession. If we are in the habit of going to Communion several times a week by permission of our confessor, and are not conscious of any grievous sin, or deliberate venial sin, on our conscience, we may rest satisfied with a weekly confession; but we should never approach our Blessed Lord in the Holy

[1] *Time after Pentecost*, i. 392.
[2] *History of the Holy Eucharist*, ii. 20.

Eucharist without a heartfelt act of contrition and of love of God, by which we may humbly hope the stain of venial sins which we have committed through human weakness may be obliterated. St. Teresa tells us a beautiful anecdote, in her instructions on the fourth petition of the Our Father, of the purity of heart Jesus expects from the daily communicant. She says a great servant of God asked permission from our Blessed Lord to receive Him daily in Holy Communion, and that our Lord showed her a most beautiful globe or ball of crystal, saying to her: 'When you are as pure as this crystal you may do so.' Nevertheless, He immediately granted her request.

Besides the obstacle of sin, there are others which may come between us and our Lord, hindering us from receiving the full fruit of the Sacrament.

Worldliness is a great obstacle to our devout reception of Jesus Christ, and unmortified desires for worldly pleasures and distinctions. We should come to Him *empty*, and He will fill us; sorrowing, and He will comfort us; loving, and He will give Himself to us in love. 'Lord, all my desire is before Thee! Thou knowest how much I stand in need of Thee, and how poor I am in virtue,' should be our cry. The love of God is not to be assumed for an hour, put on as a garment when we go to church, and dropped when we return to our ordinary life and avocations. The love of Jesus is life-long. It is shown principally by a great desire to ascertain and accomplish the Divine will in all things; by a willing sacrifice, for the love of God, of everything which we know to be displeasing to Him; and above all by a constant recourse to Him, by the elevation of the heart, in all the trials and temptations of life.

'*Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum*: "My heart uttereth a good word." Oh! how good, how profitable, how sweet is that word of the pure and mortified heart which is addressed throughout the hours of the day to its Lord and Father

. . . . an effort perhaps it must be. For as yet, whilst in this mortal body, the heart does not always find it easy to lift itself to God. But the very effort adds fuel to the flame of charity. When we love God easily and promptly, it is too often because of mere sensible feeling—at least in the beginning of our conversion. But when we have to conquer the resistance of sense and feeling, then there is fervour and merit. Thus, whether we are with others or alone, we shall always be most of all with God. When we have to spend many hours of the day in the company of others, in labour, in ministration, in business, or even in moderate recreation, the "word" of the heart must never cease for long. To forget God may not always be to offend Him, but to forget God is to waste so much of one's life, and to forfeit so many degrees of His communication in the world to come.' [1]

To assist our *immediate* preparation for receiving Holy Communion (in contradistinction to the remote, which we have hitherto been considering), we may either make use of set prayers, such as we shall find in various pious manuals, or we may turn for food for meditation to passages from the Gospels, or such books as the 'Following of Christ,' or St. Teresa's spiritual works. The objection made sometimes to the use of the former is that they tend to give a feeling of unreality to our prayers. We cannot always command our moods, so that fervent aspirations which at one time we could use with perfect sincerity we feel at another to be forced and exaggerated. To many the gospels supply an unfailing source of devotion, and suggestive points for meditation. The thoughts and affections which arise spontaneously in the heart from contemplating the words and actions of our Divine Redeemer are generally more productive of fruit and holy unction, even when the soul is suffering from the trial of aridity, than any which rise from human compositions, however holy and edifying. The

[1] Bishop Hedley's *Retreat*, pp. 364–6.

parable of the prodigal son, the words spoken by our Lord to the Samaritan woman, the Sermon on the Mount: these and numberless other Scriptural passages are all most suggestive of devout thoughts and aspirations. But perhaps there is none to which we can turn again and again, feeling we can never exhaust all the lessons that our Divine Saviour would have us learn from it, than to that of Zacheus.

In the first place we may see great cause for encouragement —for which we can never sufficiently thank God—in the recollection of who this man was, namely a publican, the chief of the publicans, and rich. It seems as if by this our Lord wished to prove to all men that no one is beyond the reach of His loving-kindness, that *all* may aspire to come to Him, and receive a welcome at His hand; for we know that the publicans were a class banned by the Jews, looked upon as extortioners and unjust, as by his own confession this one also was. And he was rich. What severe things Christ has said of the rich! 'Woe to you,' He said, 'for you have your reward.' And Mary prophesies: 'He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.' Why this change? we may indeed ask. And an answer will soon be given us.

The next verse tells us: 'He sought to see Jesus, who He was, and he could not for the crowd, for he was low of stature' (Luke xix. 3 *et seq.*). He wanted to see our Lord, to find out what He was like. This is the first inspiration God put into his heart, as it is the first He puts into the hearts of each one of us. To learn about Him, to know Him as He is, this is the first step on the road to Him, the only true wisdom of man.

We see his first difficulty. He could not see our Lord because of the crowd and because he was low of stature. Our Divine Saviour is ever a hidden God, as He tells us by His prophets. As long as we are in this world we are hemmed in by creatures: that is, all visible created things;

relations, friends, riches, ambitions, all in fine that is not God, and all that is ever interposing between our souls and our Creator. 'And Zacheus was low of stature.' Are we not also low of stature? Do we not recognize from the bottom of our hearts that we are very small, and low; unworthy so much as to lift our eyes to Him? To acknowledge this very humbly and sincerely is to make the best preparation possible to receive Him.

'And running before he climbed up into a sycamore-tree, that he might see Him.' God puts good thoughts into our hearts, but He does not force our free-wills. He leaves it to us to remove difficulties from our pathway in life in order that He may reward us for our merit in doing so. We see that Zacheus 'climbed up' in order to see Jesus. We must also rise from our sins, our low and fallen estate, by loving aspirations of the heart; by an immense desire to 'look upon the face of His Christ,' to gaze upon Him who is the most beautiful of the children of men, whom we see by faith in this world, and hope to see in the joys of the Beatific Vision hereafter.

'And when Jesus came to the place, looking up He saw him and said to him: "Zacheus, make haste, and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house." And he made haste, and came down, and received him with joy.' How beautiful, how consoling is the lesson we derive from this word of the Gospel! So does Jesus call us, by our names—us ourselves, no other; and He brooks no delay. At once we must open wide our doors to Him, and, as the 'Following of Christ' says, deny entrance to all others; for he who has Jesus *has enough*.

And we must receive Him with joy. How could it be otherwise? To possess Him is to possess all that is genuine, true, and lasting in the shape of happiness in this life. The young man who refused Christ's invitation to follow Him did so 'because he had great possessions.' Poor fool, he

did not understand that God possesses all things; not money and land only, though these also come from Him, but that joy of the heart, that true peace, without which all the rest is an empty delusion; air-bags full of nothing but vanity and disappointment.

Joy includes also praise, love, and thanksgiving. With all these gifts we must fill our hearts to make them ready for the coming of our Divine Saviour.

But Zacheus was not satisfied with loving and joyful sentiments only. These are the flowers, as it were, of the soul; there must also be the solid fruit of sacrifice and amendment of life. So standing he said to the Lord: 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold.'

Happy Zacheus! A convert of a few hours or minutes, you have yet grasped what it takes many years to understand.

This is the secret of the rich man, his key to the kingdom of heaven. The poor are Christ's representatives; rather He would have us see *Himself* in them, and by giving to them 'all things are clean' to us.

No wonder that the answer of Jesus to him is: 'This day is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham.' One word more, and we have done.

We observe in this narrative that the invitation is from Jesus: and thus it must ever be. He must say to us 'Come,' or how should we presume to approach? The sense of our unworthiness keeps us back, but the words of our Divine Saviour, full of comfort and encouragement, are ever bidding us to draw near. For, as the 'Following of Christ' says: 'When I consider Thy greatness, O Lord, and my own vileness, I tremble exceedingly, and am confounded in myself. For if I come not I fly from life, and if I intrude unworthily I incur Thy displeasure.'

It is with these sentiments of self-abasement and love, acknowledging our sinfulness and yet confiding absolutely in the goodness of God, that we should approach to the Holy Table and receive the Lamb of God, Him who takes away the sins of the world, into our hearts.

The moments after we have received Him should be spent in profound adoration.

We may picture Him to ourselves as He lay a little babe in the cave of Bethlehem, and turning to His ever-blessed Mother we may ask her to take Him up in her arms as she did on that first great Christmas night and offer Him for us, and with us, a perfect oblation, to His Eternal Father for all our needs and for those of all the Church of God. Or we may imagine Him as He sat at the house of Simon the Leper. He is now in an even more miserable home, in the cabin of our hearts. Let us kneel at His feet with the Magdalene, and if we cannot weep over our sins as she did, kissing His sacred feet, and wiping them with the hairs of her head, let us at least bewail our hardness of heart and ask of Him some share of those graces which He bestowed on her, who, though she had sinned much, loved much. Spiritual writers remind us that the moments we spend with Jesus after receiving Him in Holy Communion are most precious ones to the soul. It is a time when Jesus, seated within us, as a king on His throne, listens to our petitions, and receives our vows of love and fidelity. One thing we should ever remember: that in this adorable Sacrament Jesus does everything for us; we do nothing for Him. Let this quicken the fervour of our thanksgiving, and if the sense of our inability ever to render Him thanks worthy of the greatness of the Gift weighs us down, let us unite with the great and wondrous choir of angels who stand round about the throne, and the ancients and the four living creatures who without ceasing adored God, and say with them, 'Amen. Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and

thanksgiving, honour, and power, and strength to our God, for ever and ever. Amen.'

If our minds are wearied with vocal or mental prayer we can turn again to the New Testament, where, especially in the chapters of the Gospel of St. John of our Lord's discourse to His disciples after the Last Supper, we shall find a storehouse of devout thoughts, and ample food for meditation.

Let us take those words in which our Lord compares Himself to the true vine, and His Father to the husbandman. 'Abide in Me,' He says, 'and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, and you the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.' (John xv. 4, 5.)

Jesus desires nothing better than to take up His abode in us for ever. As long as we are united to Him by sanctifying grace, with no stain of grievous sin upon our consciences, He does so abide in us; for having once taken possession of our hearts we have to drive Him away, as it were by force, before He departs.

But what difference there is in the way the soul of man treats this Divine Guest! In the soul of the devout Christian He dwells as of right, enthroned in the seat of honour, all its powers bowing before His august will. Here it is that He fulfils the word He spoke to His disciples: 'Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name He will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.' (John xvi. 24.)

In another, the soul of the careless, the indifferent communicant, He is hurried away as a troublesome visitor, one who has to be entertained for a stated period (possibly a short quarter of an hour), and then there is the ready

return to congenial thoughts and companions, to work, or to business. This is not the way to deserve those graces which God is prepared to bestow so plentifully on the soul which really loves Him.

There is yet another class of Christians—a class which spiritual writers tell us is far from uncommon. It is that to which a soul belongs who truly loves God, but from a sense of her unworthiness hardly dares to lift her eyes to God. 'Oh, how easily is the soul alarmed when she is forgetful of her Divine Lord, who is her only treasure! It would seem impossible; and yet so great is human blindness that we daily see some soul standing aloof from an intimate union with God, through fearing to approach too near Him by a life of recollection and prayer, though she hears His loving voice, which never ceases to call out to her: "Approach."'[1]

We must humbly but sincerely face the fact, difficult as it is for anyone with self-knowledge to realise it, that in spite of our tepidity, our indifference to God's service, our repeated falls into sin, God loves us, and loves us with so unutterable a love that no earthly affection, however deep and passionate, can compare with it; a love which we shall never understand in this world, but which it will be the eternal cause of our beatitude to enjoy in the next. This is the Furnace ever burning of which the saints speak in words of rapture and ecstasy, and which we can never even momentarily approach without warming our cold hearts at its flame.

[1] St. Teresa's *Pater Noster*, p. 71.

THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH

In the first chapter we considered the place the Church occupies in the Divine economy, and learnt from Scripture and the teaching of the Fathers the doctrine of her intimate union with Jesus Christ. It is fitting therefore, before we conclude, that we should pass on to the consideration of the life she leads in, and with, her Divine Spouse.

The liturgical year, then, is the lifelong tribute of sacrifice and song which the Church never ceases to offer up night and day in praise of her Beloved; and as no pains, no efforts, could be too great for such an object, like the Valiant Woman—her prototype—'She bringeth her bread from afar' and from the uttermost coasts. From all countries under heaven she gathers in her riches of poetry and of wisdom. The wise and the learned she lays under contribution; the poets have sung her songs. From the Scriptures she gathers rich treasures of beauty and of knowledge. The sayings of the saints and martyrs adorn her pages, as the gold and frankincense her altars. 'Strength and beauty are her clothing, besides,' as the Spouse of the Canticles three times repeats, 'that which lies hidden within.' As she is one with Jesus, so is her prayer as uninterrupted as her life. And as the prophet foretold: 'From the rising of the sun even to the going down my Name is great among the Gentiles: and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my

Name a clean Oblation: for my Name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts.' (Mal. i. 11.)

Again in the Divine Office which her priests unceasingly recite she sings seven times a day the praises of her God.

In the words of Dom Guéranger, 'The Church being united to Him necessitated her making religion (or what is the same, *worship*) the very essence of her existence. The magnificent celebrations of her liturgy, joined with the perfect integrity of her faith, will ever distinguish her, amidst the countless sects that lay claim to truth, as the true Bride of Christ, who alone is one with Him. Hence the Temple—where God is most solemnly worshipped by the adorable sacrifice and its accompaniment, its preparation, its sequel of the choral service of Divine Office—the Temple consecrated to God is the Church's home. If she leave it for a time it is only to bring back with her more and more worshippers. It is there that she convenes her children to join her in celebrating the mysteries wrought by our Lord or in honouring His blessed Mother, or the Angels, or the Saints. It is there she becomes the joyful mother of children to her Spouse.'[1] Is it wonderful that some are found—chosen souls—who, attracted by that 'beauty ever ancient, ever new,' have given up their lives to her service, and that of her Divine Spouse: 'and because they are filled with her spirit, the spirit of Religion, she distinguishes them from all the rest of her sons and daughters by the name of Religious? . . . These Religious are, then, one of the most unmistakable manifestations of the Church's union with Christ, and for that very reason no human power can deprive her of that manifestation. She, by being Bride of Christ, is one Body with Him; that Body exists only for the purpose of being offered in sacrifice of

[1] *The Liturgical Year: Pentecost*, ii. 112. We have drawn from Dom Guéranger's monumental work, as from a rich store-house, in the following pages. The reader, we trust, will not be satisfied with extracts, but will refer to the original for further information on liturgical and kindred subjects.

complete homage to the Eternal Father, and the Church fulfils all this fully and unreservedly in those whose whole being, by the vows they make and the sublime consecration given to them by the Church, is absorbed into the *Religion* and perfect oblation of Christ Jesus, the Eternal High Priest.'[1] But it is not to these chosen souls *only* that 'the Spirit and the Bride say, Come.' All Christians, in their measure and degree and according to the grace given them, are invited. 'Ye are temples of the Holy Ghost,' the Apostle says; and for what reason are we called temples, unless it is that a chorus of love, praise, and thanksgiving should continually rise from our hearts—as from an altar—to the worship of Him who resides there?

To join, therefore, in the sacred liturgy at Mass, and if possible in the canonical hours of the Church, should be the aim of all devout Catholics.

In the primitive ages of the Church the laity constantly assisted at the Divine Office, and rose, as the Monastic Orders alone do in these degenerate days, at all hours of the night to join with the Clergy or Religious in chanting the praises of God. Tertullian witnesses to this custom by his letter of warning to a Christian against taking a Pagan husband. How will she, he asks, be able to conceal from him this custom of all Christians of rising on the vigils of feasts in order to pray?

That our English forefathers were in no way behind their brethren in other parts of the world in this respect the splendid cathedrals and monastic churches show to this day; some, alas! like Glastonbury and Rievaulx, in ruins, and others, like York Minster, empty and forlorn, testifying to the change that has come over the land, and showing that the Ages of Faith are indeed past.

The work of the Reformation was thorough. Again it was said: 'Let us abolish all the festival days of God from

[1] *Ibid.* p. 113.

the earth.' The plea of the new religion, that it was waste of money to adorn the altar of the living God, laid bare His sanctuaries; and the second plea, that it was waste of time to sing His praises, silenced the chant in His churches.

For us whose lot it is to live in happier times, and to witness, as we are doing, a great and striking return to Catholic devotions and practices, it is natural that we should ask ourselves what we can do to hasten the moment of His coming.

To this there can be but one answer. The Church is one with Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

It is therefore by returning to the primitive ordinances of the Church, especially to a faithful and constant attendance at Mass—the great devotion of our Catholic ancestors—to the practice of liturgical prayer, a prayer more acceptable to God than any private devotions could possibly be, inasmuch as by means of it we join with the whole Church in union with Christ our Head; to the practice of penance; to the contemplation of the mysteries of the life of our Lord as commemorated in the ever-recurring feasts of the year—it is by these means that we may hope to obtain the grace of the return of our countrymen to the Fold of Christ.

Above all, let us guard ourselves from looking at these great feasts and mysteries as pageants in which we are little but spectators. They have all a message of deepest significance to our souls. By means of them we enter, even in this life, into the kingdom that was promised to us. 'At Christmas Christ was born within us; at Passion-tide He passed on and into us His sufferings and His atonements; at Easter He communicated to us His glorious, His untrammelled life: in His Ascension He drew us after Him—and this even to the summit of heaven; in a word, as the Apostle expresses it, "Christ was formed in us."'[1]

[1] *Liturgical Year; Pentecost*, i. 4.

It is therefore Jesus Christ Himself who is the source as well as the object of the liturgy; 'and hence the ecclesiastical year which we have undertaken to explain is neither more nor less than the manifestation of Jesus Christ and His mysteries in the Church and the faithful soul. It is the divine cycle in which appear all the works of God, each in its turn: the seven days of the Creation; the Pasch and Pentecost of the Jewish people; the ineffable visit of the Incarnate Word; the descent of the Holy Ghost; the Holy Eucharist; the surpassing glories of the Mother of God, ever a virgin; the magnificence of the angels; the merits and triumphs of the saints. Thus the cycle of the Church may be said to have its beginning under the Patriarchal Law; its progress under the Written Law; and its completion under the Law of Love, in which, at length having attained its last perfection, it will disappear in eternity, as the Written Law gave way the day on which the invincible power of the Blood of the Lamb rent asunder the veil of the Temple.'

Great indeed is the glory which is given to the Blessed Trinity, to our Saviour, to the Blessed Virgin, and to all the Angels and Saints by this commemoration of the mysteries of our holy faith. 'If every year the Church renews her youth as that of the eagle, she does so because, by means of the cycle of the Liturgy, she is visited by her Divine Spouse, who supplies all her wants.... The graces of all these divine mysteries are renewed in her; so that, being made fruitful in every good thing, the mystic garden yields to the Spouse in every season under the influence of the Spirit He breathes into her the sweet perfume of aromatic spices.'[1]

Advent

The institution of the holy season of Advent, with which the ecclesiastical year opens, dates from the earliest times of

[1] *Ibid. Advent*, p. 12.

Christianity. In modern days it has been restricted to four weeks, but in the fourth and fifth and many successive centuries it lasted for forty days. St. Gregory of Tours, in his 'History of the Franks,' mentions that one of his predecessors, St. Perpetuus, who occupied the see about the year 480, decreed a fast of three days a week from the feast of St. Martin till Christmas. In the ninth Canon of the First Council of Macon, in the year 582, we again are met with the same injunction to the faithful of a three days' fast weekly between St. Martin's feast and Christmas, coupled with the decree that the Sacrifice should be offered according to the Lenten rite. Numerous allusions to the Advent fast are found in the Councils and Papal decrees of the tenth and eleventh centuries, but by degrees the discipline of the Church was so far relaxed that a four weeks' preparation for Christmas was all that was enforced in the Western Church, though in some of the liturgies—for instance, the Ambrosian and the Mozarabic—the six weeks' Advent is still retained. The outward observance of Advent is curtailed, but the spirit with which the Church wishes to inspire her children is ever the same. As the forty days, or, according to our modern custom, four weeks, are intended to commemorate the 4,000 years (according to the calculation of the Hebrew Scriptures) of the expectation of the Jewish People for the Messiah, so she would have her faithful children give up a little time to heartfelt preparation for the great mystery of which she yearly celebrates the accomplishment: the birth in time of Him who is from all eternity. And for this end she strives to fill them with two heartfelt sentiments: one of profound compunction of soul for past sins and shortcomings whereby they have offended God and put obstacles in the way of His spiritual advent to their souls; the other an ardent desire for His coming, who is the Holy One of Israel, the Emmanuel, the Desired of Nations. St. Peter of Blois, in his third sermon on Advent, says: 'There are three Comings of our Lord: the

first in the flesh, the second in the soul, the third in judgment. The first was at midnight, according to the words of the Gospel, "At midnight there was a cry made: Lo, the Bridegroom cometh." But this coming is long since past, for Christ has been seen on the earth, and has conversed among men. We are now in the second Coming, provided only we are such as that He may thus come to us; for He has said that "if we love Him He will come unto us and will take up His abode with us." So that this second Coming is full of uncertainty to us; for who, save the Spirit of God, knows them that are of God? They that are raised out of themselves by the desire of heavenly things know indeed when He comes, but "whence He cometh or whither He goeth" they know not. As for the third Coming, it is most certain that it *will be*, most uncertain *when* it will be: for nothing is more certain than death, and nothing less sure than the hour of death. "When they shall say peace and security," says the Apostle, "then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as the pains upon her that is with child, and they shall not escape." So that the first Coming was humble and hidden, the second is mysterious and full of love, the third will be majestic and terrible.'[1]

It is in the exercise, therefore, of the virtues of penance and self-humiliation, which theologians have called the Purgative way, that the Church would have us to prepare to keep the great festival of Christmas. Every day in her office of Sext she cries out to the Lord, 'Pierce my flesh with thy fear.' She trembles for her children, and would have them tremble for themselves. To denote this sadness and compunction which fills the mind of the Church, she clothes her priests in purple vestments in Advent, and she no longer intones the glorious hymn of the *Te Deum* in her night office. 'It is in deep humility that she awaits the supreme blessing which is to come to her: and in the

[1] *De Adventu Sermo III.; ibid.* p. 32.

interval she presumes only to ask and intreat and to hope.'[1] Likewise the angelic canticle, the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, is no longer sung at Mass, excepting on the feasts of saints. Another change will be observed at the end of Mass. The deacon no longer sings *Ite, missa est*; he substitutes for this the words *Benedicamus Domino*, to indicate that, instead of dismissing the faithful after Mass, the Church would rather invite them to continue their prayers and supplications. But though she mourns, the Church does not suspend her Alleluias. Her Spouse is with her, He is on her altars—unlike the Jews, whose altar was desolate and their Temple laid bare—and so she still sings her song of rejoicing to Him.

The first Sunday in Advent is known in the early liturgies as the *Ad te levavi* Sunday, from the first words of the Introit; the station is on this day held at St. Mary Major's.[2] The Church in the night office takes her lesson from Isaias, and she continues through the whole of Advent to give passages from this holy book relating to the Messianic phophecies. Let us then—even if we have not courage to rise in the middle of the night—devoutly meditate on the exquisite plaint of the great Prophet:

. . . Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have brought up children, and exalted them: but they have despised me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel hath not known me, and my people have not understood.

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[1] *Ibid.* p. 36.

[2] The Stations marked in the Roman Missal for certain days in the year were formerly processions, in which the whole clergy and people went to some given church, and there celebrated the Office and Mass. This usage, which dates from the earliest period of the Roman Church, and of which St. Gregory the Great was but the restorer, still exists, at least in a measure; for the Stations are still observed, though with less solemnity, on all the days specified in the Missal.—*Liturgical Year: Advent*, p. 127.

The people of Israel, His own chosen ones, had abandoned their loving God; they had gone each one after his own will. And so, in like manner, have we, His people after a holier dispensation, bound to Him by ten thousand closer ties; for, unlike the Jews, we have supped at His table, and been fed on his Precious Body and Blood, and yet have we not, ungrateful even as they were, gone after false gods? Have not our hearts owned allegiance other than His? The world, the flesh, and the devil, have they gained no entrance there?

These thoughts which the Church would put before us in the night office she again enforces by her epistle at Mass. The lesson we there read is taken from St. Paul to the Romans (xiii. 11–14): 'Brethren, know that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light . . . Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.'

How beautifully the Apostle sums up the compendium of our duty as Christians in that word: 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ!' Unite yourselves, O Christian souls (he seems to say), to your Lord, become one with Him as He desires to be one with you. Inflame your hearts with that desire shadowed forth indeed by the prophets of old in their longing for the desired of nations, but fulfilled in our time by Him who has given Himself up to us and who has said, 'If any one love Me he will keep My word and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and will make our abode in him.'

But because the Church knows but too well that many of her children are deaf to the Divine appeal, she puts before them in the Gospel the warning words of our Lord Himself regarding His last coming, in judgment:

At that time Jesus said to His disciples: There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars: and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves: men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved: and then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty.

The night office for the first Monday in Advent (and all successive ones) begins thus: 'Come, let us adore our Lord the King who is to come'; and again we read from the prophet Isaias (i. 16–18):

Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices from my eyes: cease to do perversely, learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge for the fatherless, defend the widow. And then come, and accuse me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool.

In this cleansing spoken of by the prophet, the Church sees a type of the cleansing waters of penance, and she would here encourage her children to have recourse to this great Sacrament, so that, being cleansed by the Precious Blood, they may, with the help of Divine grace, start a new life for the future. On the Saturday of the first week in Advent the Church puts before us in her night office the prophecy of Isaias: 'Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel.' St. Bernard, transported at these words, cries: 'The Word of God comes, but Mary is the way whereby He comes; it is from her virginal womb He issues, as the Bridegroom from the nuptial chamber. Let us endeavour therefore to go up to Jesus by Mary, for Jesus came down to us by her. By thee, O Blessed one! that didst find Grace, O Parent of Life, O Mother of Salvation, may we have access to thy Son! May He who was given to us by thee receive us by thee! May He admit

thy purity and for its sake forgive our impurities! May He give us the pardon of our pride because of the pleasure He took in thy humility! May thy abundant charity cover the multitude of our sins! May thy glorious fruitfulness get us fruitfulness of merit! Our Lady! our Mediatrix! our Advocate! reconcile us to thy Son, commend us to thy Son, present us to thy Son!'[1]

The station for the second Sunday in Advent is kept in the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. The office of this Sunday is full of songs of rejoicing. The thought that 'the Lord is nigh' seems perpetually on the lips and in the thoughts of Holy Church. Thus we read from Isaias (ch. xi.):

> And there shall come forth a Branch out of the root of Jesse, and a Flower shall rise up out of his root. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge and of godliness: and he shall be filled with the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. . . . He shall judge the poor with justice, and shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.

The Mass begins with a trumpet-song of rejoicing:

Introit

> People of Sion, behold the Lord will come to save the Gentiles: and the Lord will make the glory of His voice heard to the joy of your hearts.

The lesson is taken from the Epistle to the Romans, in which St. Paul bids his brethren have fresh courage in the service of God: 'Brethren, what things soever were written, were written for our learning; that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of one mind one towards another according to Jesus Christ, that with one mind and with one mouth you may glorify God. . . . Now

[1] *De Adventu Sermo II.; ibid.* p. 162.

the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Ghost.' Joyous words of comfort to all within the true fold, but to those without what a sentence of condemnation! For how can they hope who are not 'of one mind' either with each other or with the Church, and are blown about with 'every wind of doctrine'? Let us thank God fervently for His mercy to us, and implore Him to extend it to all who have wandered from Him in the paths of heresy and schism.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception, which the Church celebrates on December 8, comes at the end of the first, or sometimes in the second week of Advent.

Though the dogma of the Immaculate Conception has only been proclaimed since 1854, the feast of the Conception of our Lady has been kept by the Greeks as early as the sixth century (as we learn by the Ceremonial, or, as it is called, Type of St. Sabas), and a little later on, in the eighth century, it was adopted by the Gothic Church of Spain. Sixtus IV. was the first Pope to have this feast proclaimed in Rome, which was done in the year 1476.[1]

The night office of this feast is full of allusion to the sublime dignity of Mary, and to her virginal purity, which made her worthy of becoming the Tabernacle of the Most High. In the antiphon constantly repeated, we have the beautiful words of the Church: 'Thou art all fair, Mary, and the stain of original sin is not in thee.' In the Gradual of the Mass she is thus saluted: 'Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honour of our people. Alleluia, alleluia.' In the epistle the words from the Book of Proverbs (ch. viii.) are referred to her: 'The Lord possessed me in the beginnings of His ways.' We read in the gospel, which is from that of St. Luke (ch. i. 28 *et seq.*) how the angel appeared to Mary, 'in a city of Galilee called

[1] The Church in Spain has kept the feast of the Immaculate Conception since the thirteenth century.

Nazareth,' with the salutation 'Hail, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.' Glorious words, on which the Church, inspired by her Divine Spouse, has built up a loving devotion which has spread, and is spreading daily, over every nation of the earth; and justly, for to what child of earth, save to the spotless Virgin only have words such as these been uttered? For every other man born of woman is under the same condemnation; 'he knows not,' as the Scripture says, 'whether he is worthy of love or hatred.' To Mary alone, an angel straight from the presence of God announces that she is 'full of grace,' and again that she has 'found grace before God.' 'O beautiful Mother! O spotless Mother!' the Church cries, 'Jesus came to us by thee; show us the way to Him. Blessed art thou, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.'

The Church celebrates the Octave of this feast with daily antiphons and commemorations of the Blessed Virgin.

On the Third Sunday of Advent the Nocturns begin with the prayer: 'The Lord is now nigh; come, let us adore'; and the lessons are taken from the 26th chapter of Isaias: 'In that day shall this canticle be sung in the land of Juda. Sion the city of our strength: a Saviour, a wall, and a bulwark shall be set therein.'

The epistle at Mass again alludes to the near approach of the coming of our Lord. It is from the fourth chapter to the Philippians: 'Brethren, rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men: the Lord is nigh.' The Lord is nigh. These are the words we should take to our hearts, and meditate upon deeply. He is here, the Holy One—even at our gates. And should these words of warning of the Apostle not suffice, again this truth is put before us in the gospel:

At that time the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and levites to John to ask him: 'Who art thou?' And he confessed, and he did not deny, and he confessed: 'I am not the Christ.' And they

asked him: 'What then? Art thou Elias?' And he said: 'I am not.' . . . He said: 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord."'

The Lord is nigh, make straight the way; prepare your hearts for His Coming. This is the invitation of the Gospel; for when He comes He will turn to us and leave a blessing behind. All these, and many more kindred thoughts, does the liturgy of the Church put before us to animate us with a keen desire to be ready for the coming of her Lord and Spouse.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent has arrived, and again the Church has recourse to Isaias in the night office to express her feelings of joy and exultation as the great day approaches:

The land that was desolate and impassable shall be glad, and the wilderness shall rejoice and shall flourish like the lily. It shall bud forth and blossom, and shall rejoice with joy and praise. The glory of Libanus is given to it, the beauty of Carmel and Saron. They shall see the glory of the Lord and the beauty of our God. Strengthen ye the feeble hands, and confirm the weak knees. Say to the faint-hearted: Take courage, and fear not. Behold your God.

At the Mass we read again the enraptured cry of the prophet in the Introit: 'Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just One. Let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour. The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the works of His hand.'

In the epistle allusion is made to the dignity of the priesthood,[1] and in the gospel we are again recalled to thoughts connected with this holy season by the words of St. Luke (ch. iii.) recording the mission of the Baptist. Again are the words quoted of Isaias: 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. Every valley shall

[1] The fourth Sunday of Advent is preceded always by Ember week, in which ordinations are held.

be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways plain; and all flesh shall see salvation.'

On December the 17th commences what are known as the *Greater Ferias*,[1] or in other words the Church's special preparation for Christmas. Every day a solemn antiphon is sung at Vespers, addressed to the Messiah in one of the terms by which He is alluded to in the Holy Scriptures. These antiphons are sometimes called the O's of Advent, as they all begin with that interjection.

First Antiphon

O Wisdom that proceedeth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end, disposing all things with strength and sweetness, come and teach us the way of prudence.

Second Antiphon

O Adonai and leader of the house of Israel, who appearedst to Moses in the fire of the flaming bush and gavest him the law on Sinai, come and redeem us by thy outstretched arm.

On this day, the 18th of December, is kept the feast of the Expectation of the Blessed Virgin. This feast, which was first instituted in Spain by the Council of Toledo in 656, is now celebrated by the whole Church. Let us not fail to animate ourselves by the example of our Lady, and let us ask, through her intercession, to have a great desire to look upon the face of her Son, and to make ready for His Coming.

Third Antiphon

O Root of Jesse, who standest as the standard of the people; before whom kings shall not open their lips, to whom the nations shall pray: come and deliver us, tarry now no more.

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[1] 'Feria' originally signified 'holiday.' It is the name given by the Church for the days of the week.

Fourth Antiphon

O Key of David, and sceptre of the House of Israel; who openest and no man shutteth; who shuttest and no man openeth; come and lead the captive from prison, sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Fifth Antiphon

O Orient; splendour of eternal light, and Sun of Justice, come and enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Sixth Antiphon

O King of nations, and their Desired One, and the Corner-stone that makest both one; come and save man, whom Thou formedst out of slime.

The Great Antiphon in honour of Christ

O King of peace! that wast born before all ages, come by the golden gate; visit them whom thou hast redeemed, and lead them back to the place whence they fell by sin.

Seventh Antiphon

O Emmanuel, our King and law-giver, the Expectation and Saviour of the nations! Come and save us, O Lord our God!

The Great Antiphon to Jerusalem

O Jerusalem, city of the great God! lift up thine eyes round about and see thy Lord, for He is coming to loose thee from thy chains.

Christmas Eve

The great characteristic of the liturgy of this day is, as it were, a holy impatience, a longing not to be restrained to look upon the face of the Christ. Like Isaias in the vehemence of his desire, the Church says, 'For God's sake I will not hold my peace, and for the sake of Jerusalem I will not rest, till her Just One come forth as brightness. O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and wouldst come down.' Thus

the Church on the eve of all the other great feasts of the year only begins to celebrate the solemnity at Vespers, but on this feast she begins from Lauds at early morning to rejoice at His presence as if He had already come. In the Invitatory she cries with Moses, when he announced that on the morrow the people of Israel were to be fed with the heavenly manna (for are we not expecting our Saviour, the Bread of Life, in Bethlehem, which is the House of Bread?):

'This day ye shall know that the Lord will come and in the morning ye shall see His glory.' And again in the Responsories of the night office we read:

Sanctify yourselves this day and be ready; for on the morrow you shall see the majesty of God amongst you. Be ye constant; ye shall see the help of the Lord upon you. Fear not, Judea and Jerusalem. To-morrow ye shall go forth, and the Lord shall be with you. Sanctify yourselves, ye children of Israel, and be ye ready, for to-morrow the Lord shall be with you.

Again in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, she continually repeats the joyous message: 'This day ye shall know that the Lord will come and save us, and in the morning ye shall see His glory. *V.* Thou who rulest Israel, hearken, Thou who leadest Joseph like a sheep. Thou who sittest on the Cherubim, show Thyself to Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses.'

As the evening approaches let us call to mind that the early Christians prepared for great feasts by vigils: that is, by spending many hours in the church, praying and uniting with the ministers of God in singing the psalms and lessons which we call *Matins*. Now, alas! all that remains of these holy customs is the mitigated fast or abstinence which still goes by that name. If we are unable to imitate the devotion and fervour of our forefathers in their prolonged prayers and vigils, let us at least make what preparation we may for this holy feast with loving and fervent hearts, uniting

ourselves in spirit with Mary and Joseph, and trying to share their feelings of ardent desire to see the face of the Infant God.

Christmas Day

This feast has been kept from the very earliest times on December the 25th, and many of the great Fathers of the Church, such as St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Ambrose, St. Maximus, St. Leo, and in later days St. Bernard, have dwelt on the Providential coincidence of the feast of our Saviour's birth, the advent of 'the Light of the World,' being kept on the day when the sun, having been long plunged in darkness, is beginning once more to regain its power and glory in the heavens. The Church gives up forty days to the celebration of this great feast, and even should Easter be early, so that Septuagesima and Sexagesima Sundays infringe upon it, she still makes the Christmas commemorations, though she puts off the white garments of her priests, to make way for the purple of Lent. This forty days' commemoration is founded on the Gospel which relates how after forty days Mary went up to the Temple according to the law of Moses, and to make a sacrifice to the Lord. The festival of Christmas ends, therefore, with the Purification of Mary; and during every day and numberless times in Mass and divine office, the Church gives utterance in enraptured song and prose to her joy and admiration of those two great marvels—an Infant God and a Virgin Mother.

As Advent has approached its termination we have seen the Church changing the tone of her liturgy from the one of mourning and compunction of heart with which she began it to a holy joy befitting the coming of the Son of God. She would teach her children by this means that the road to God is ever one of penance: in fine, the Purgative way. This road has now led them to the House of Bethlehem, where He, their Saviour and their God, will meet them as He did the

adoring gaze of the Shepherds and the Magi, as a little Babe; and there He will give Himself to them as the Food of their souls. Yes, He shows Himself only to His first worshippers, but for us He has reserved a sweeter fate. For having said that He 'loved us with an everlasting love,' He has, from all eternity, planned to give Himself to us, His chosen people in Bethlehem, the House of Bread, so that they might take it as a token of the truth of His word, 'I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.' Let us, then, with great fervour and devotion receive our dearest Lord in the Sacrament of His love, and in doing so try to make amends for the ingratitude and indifference of so many of His children. 'There was no room for him in the inn,' the gospel tells us; and again St. John says: 'He came unto His own, and His own received him not.' The world, which ignored Him then, ignores Him now; but as the Apostle adds: 'As many as received Him, He gave them power to be made Sons of God, to them that believe in His name; who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God.'

'So that,' as Dom Guéranger adds, 'all they who—having purified their souls, freed themselves from the slavery of *flesh* and *blood*, and renounced everything which is of *man*, inasmuch as *man* means *sinner*—wish now to open their hearts to the Divine Word, that is to the Light which shineth in darkness, and which darkness did not comprehend: these, I say, are born with Jesus, they are born of God; they begin a new life, as did the Son of God Himself in this mystery of His birth in Bethlehem. . . . The mystery of Christmas, therefore, is one of Illumination; and the grace it produces in the soul that corresponds with it places her in the second stage of the Mystic Life which is called the Illuminative Life. Henceforth we need no longer weary ourselves watching for our Saviour's arrival; He has come, He has shone upon us.'[1]

[1] *Liturgical Year: Advent*, p. 206.

He has come: He is with us. 'The Word is made Flesh.' 'The nuptials of the Lamb are come, and His Spouse hath prepared herself.' These are the thoughts that crowd upon us as we visit the Crib, and kneel before the representation of the Infant God, His Blessed Mother, and His holy foster-father, St. Joseph. The shepherds also are there, that is, the innocent, the simple, the lowly of heart, the worshippers whom God saw fit first to call to the feet of His Son. Let us, however unworthy, join with them and with the angels, and sing with them 'Glory be to God, and on earth peace to men of good will.'

The first Vespers of the feast (sung on the Eve) begin with the 116th Psalm: 'O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people. For His mercy is confirmed upon us, and the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever.'

This is followed by the Capitulum from Tit. iii. 4: 'The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour hath appeared; not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to His mercy hath He saved us.'

Then the choir joins in singing the glorious hymn of St. Ambrose—sometimes called the Bee of Milan—*Jesu Redemptor omnium*; after which follow the psalms.

Matins, which are sung on this day before midnight, begin with the glad Invitatory: 'Christ is born unto us; come, let us adore.' After which is sung the 94th Psalm: 'Come, let us praise the Lord with joy: let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise to Him with psalms.' After every versicle, the Invitatory: 'Christ is born unto us: come, let us adore.' Matins terminate with a solemn *Te Deum*.

Three Masses are said, all over the Church, on Christmas Day. The first, or Midnight Mass, is offered up in honour of the birth of Jesus in the stable of Bethlehem *in time*. The second, or the Mass of the Aurora, in honour of the birth

of our Saviour by grace in the hearts of the shepherds, the first fruits of the Redemption of Christ. The third, in honour of the generation or birth of the Son of God from all eternity with His Father. The epistles and gospels of these Masses will give us abundant food for meditation on these great mysteries of the birth of our Saviour. Let us then take the Missal, and uniting with the Church militant on earth and the Church triumphant in heaven, let us sing, with heart, if not with lips, the praises of our Infant Saviour. 'Come and let us adore the Babe of Bethlehem,' as the seraphic St. Francis cries, 'for He is exceedingly to be loved.'

On the four days which succeed Christmas Day the Church keeps the festival of three great saints and martyrs, and the feast of the Holy Innocents.

On the 26th is the feast of St. Stephen, protomartyr. The first soldier who shed his blood for Christ, it is fitting that he should stand as it were as a sentinel at the crib of his Divine Master.

On the 27th the Church keeps the feast of St. John the Evangelist, the 'disciple whom Jesus loved,' and who therefore had a special right to proximity in heaven, as on earth, to his Divine Master.

On the 28th is the feast of the Holy Innocents. Too young to obtain merit for their actions, the Church yet sees in them martyrs, inasmuch as they died for Christ's sake, and so she hails them in her martyrology as 'the flowers of the martyrs': '*Salvete flores martyrum.*'

On the 29th she keeps the feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury, who with heroic fortitude sacrificed his life for the liberties of the Church.

A new year begins, and with it the feast of the Circumcision. Jesus first sheds His blood for man, and as we read in the gospel of the day, 'His name was called Jesus, which was called by the Angel, before He was conceived in the

womb.' To this feast of the Infant Saviour the Church joins a tribute of special love in honour of the Virgin Mother. The great fact is ever present with her that Jesus came to us by Mary; and that as Eve by the use she made of her free will brought sin, and its punishment, death, into the world, so the second Eve, by her *Fiat* co-operating with her Creator in the great work of Redemption, brought the Life that was the Light of man into the world.

In the five solemn antiphons which are sung at Divine Office the Church commemorates the dignities of the Mother of God, and salutes her by one of the names by which she is typified in Holy Writ.

The Epiphany

This great day, in which the Church keeps the manifestation of our Lord's coming to the Gentiles, typified by the Magi, is one of rejoicing throughout the Christian world.

The epistle is from Isaias (ch. lx.), 'Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.' The gospel (Matt. ch. ii.) gives us the history of the wise men, who seeing the star in the east followed it, till 'it stood over where the Child was, and they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.'

How many are there to-day who, in all countries, will rejoice with the Magi, and keep this feast with them! Like them they lived afar off, in darkness, a mist distorting their vision so that they could not see the fair proportions of the Bride of Christ, and hiding her truth from their eyes. And they saw the star and followed it with much difficulty, and pain, and many trials, and it led them to His feet, and now they rejoice with exceeding great joy.

In the epistle of the Sunday within the octave of the Epiphany (Rom. ch. xii.) St. Paul says: 'Brethren, I beseech you that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world, but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God.' The history of a spiritual life is always a history of a series of conversions to God. Our own experiences will prove this, as well as the teaching of the Saints. It is not enough to have turned once to God with our whole hearts; human nature is not daunted by one defeat; we must return again and again to the charge, so that our minds and souls and bodies should be brought into entire subjection to the perfect will of God. This should be our aim, though in this life we may never fully realise it.

Our Lord, in the passage from the gospel of this Sunday (Luke ch. ii.), gives us an example of the single-mindedness we should aspire to in the service of God. We read how He and His blessed Mother and Joseph went up to Jerusalem for the feast, and how when He remained there His Parents sought Him sorrowing. 'And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?' This detachment God asks of all who dedicate themselves, as in the priesthood, entirely to His service.

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany is dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus. The Introit is as follows:

> At the Name of Jesus let every knee bend in heaven, on earth and under the earth; and every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.
>
> *Ps.* O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is Thy name over the whole earth!

The epistle (Acts ch. iv.) gives us the grounds on which the Church founds this devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus,

for St. Peter, 'being filled with the Holy Ghost,' proclaimed to all the people assembled who had witnessed the raising to life of the dead man that the miracle was done 'by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ whom you crucified. . . . For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved.' The name of Jesus is full of joy and consolation to His children. In life it supports them through the severest trials and temptations; in death, it is their comfort and solace. 'Call upon me,' says the Lord, 'in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' The gospel for to-day is the same as that on the feast of the Circumcision (Luke ii.).

Feast of the Purification, or Candlemas Day

The forty days have elapsed, and Mary, obedient to the law, goes up to Jerusalem to offer the prescribed sacrifice, carrying in her arms the Saviour of Mankind. What feelings of holy joy and exultation must have filled her heart as she presented the Divine Babe in the Temple! For the first time since the beginning of the world a creature has presented God with an offering worthy of Himself. The prophecy is fulfilled: 'I will move all nations and the Desired of all nations shall come; and I will fill this House with glory. Great shall be the glory of this House, more than of the first, and in this place I will give Peace, saith the Lord of hosts.' God has taken possession of His Tabernacle. The figures of the Old Law are entirely superseded to make room for the Reality—the living Presence of the Son of God in His own creation.

For this great, this divine gift of God to man, will never be revoked; in the fulness of time He will give it as His last benefit to His children in the Church; it will be perpetuated for ever in His Eucharistic life on her altars.

The blessing of the candles,[1] which are lighted during the gospel and from the *Sanctus* to the Communion during Mass, takes place before Mass.

At the Introit we read:

We have received Thy mercy, O God, in the midst of Thy temple; according to Thy name, O God, so also is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth. Thy right hand is full of justice.

Ps. Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised in the city of God and in His holy mountain.

The epistle of the Mass for this feast is from the prophecy of Malachy (ch. iii.): 'Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I send my angel, and he shall prepare the way before my face. . . . Behold, he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts, and who shall be able to think of the day of his coming, and who shall stand to see him? For he is like a refining fire, and like the fuller's herb, and he shall sit refining and cleansing the silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and shall refine them as gold and as silver.' The Scripture tells us in another place that our God is a consuming fire; before He takes possession of our hearts, which is His end in becoming Incarnate, He wishes to purify us of sin and attachment to creatures. Let us suffer Him to refine and purify our hearts, even should it be in the fiery furnace of affliction, and let us try to say with Mary: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Thy word.'

The gospel in which we read how holy Simeon, taking the child Jesus in his arms, sang his beautiful *Nunc dimittis*, the evening-song of the Church, is from St. Luke (ch. ii.).

The epistle of the Third Sunday after the Epiphany (Rom. ch. xii.) insists on the blessings of peace and charity to all men. It is the lesson of the blessed coming of the

[1] The feast of the Purification was instituted on the day on which the ancient Lupercalia had been held; the Christians thus turning what had been a Pagan procession into a devotional practice in honour of the Mother of God.

Infant Christ. He comes, so to speak, with His arms full of blessings to mankind, and it is by following His example, to no man rendering evil for evil, and overcoming evil by good, that we shall deserve a share in His choicest gifts, especially that of great peace in our hearts. The gospel (Matt. ch. viii.) gives the narrative of two of our Divine Saviour's most striking miracles—that of the healing of the leper, and the cure of the servant of the Roman Centurion.

The epistle of the Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany (Rom. ch. xiii.) begins with these touching words: 'Brethren, owe no man anything but to love one another; for he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law.' Love, and ever more love, is the ever-recurring lesson of this holy time. It is the teaching of the Babe in the crib of Bethlehem, and it is one we must take home with us and make the leading feature of our lives if we wish to profit by the example of Christ and the teaching of His Church.

The gospel of this Sunday (Matt. ch. viii.) shows us Jesus sleeping in the boat with His disciples: 'and behold a great tempest arose, so that the boat was covered with waves.' So it is with us in our journey through life. Sometimes we glide through pleasant scenes with loving friends round us, at other times storms threaten to overwhelm us. In our trials let us turn to our merciful Saviour—He is ever with us, unless we have first renounced Him—and not as the disciples turned, fearful of shipwreck, but with great confidence, and we may be sure He will 'command the winds and the sea, and there will come great calm.'

The epistle for the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany is from that of St. Paul to the Colossians (ch. iii.). Twice in this lesson the Apostle exhorts us to the practice of thanksgiving: 'Let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body; and be ye thankful.' And again: 'All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,

giving thanks to God and the Father.' Ingratitude is a sin most displeasing to God, and, as spiritual writers tell us, it hardens the heart and dries up the channel of God's grace. It was the special sin of the Jews, and one with which God continually reproaches them by the mouth of His prophet. Let it not be ours, who live under a brighter dispensation. Let us rather follow the example of the seraphic St. Francis, and call on all animated nature to join with us in giving praise, love, honour, and thanksgiving to our merciful Creator.

The gospel is from St. Matthew (ch. xiii.), of the parable of the sower.

The epistle of the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany (1 Thes. ch. i.) tells us of the faith and earnestness of the Thessalonians, how they received 'the word in much tribulation, with joy of the Holy Ghost.' This is not the first place in which this Blessed Apostle speaks of that joy, which coming straight from the Holy Spirit—one of whose gifts is joy—is independent of earthly pleasures or woes; rather, thriving in the rough and bitter soil of earthly tribulations. The happy soul that possesses it enjoys a peace which surpasses all understanding, and is on the straight road to the kingdom of God.

The gospel, from St. Matthew (ch. xiii.), is that in which our Divine Saviour compares the kingdom of heaven to a grain of mustard seed, 'which is the least indeed of all seeds, but when it is grown up it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree.'

Our Lord constantly compares faith, or, as He does here, the kingdom of God, which we take possession of by faith, to a grain of mustard seed. Faith in its earliest beginnings is indeed very insignificant. It may come to us merely as a passing thought or suspicion, but if it takes root in our hearts, through God's grace and our own co-operation, it will grow to vast dimensions, transforming utterly our lives, and pre-

paring them for that glorious hereafter which God has in store for all who believe in Him.

Septuagesima

Septuagesima Sunday, whether it comes at its earliest, and thus interrupts the forty days of rejoicing which the Church dedicates to the Infant Saviour, or at its latest, so that the full measure is told of the six Sundays after the Epiphany, marks a fresh period, and as it were departure, in the liturgical year.

In these seven weeks which elapse between Septuagesima Sunday and Easter, the Fathers have seen a figure of the Seven Ages into which Christian tradition has divided the world, in which Christianity occupies the seventh or concluding one.

St. Augustine gives us a clue to its hidden meaning in these words: 'There are two periods of time: one, the present time, which is spent in the temptations and tribulations of this life; the other, which shall be hereafter, and shall be spent in eternal security and joy. In figure of these we celebrate two periods: the "Time before Easter," and the "Time after Easter." That which is before Easter signifies the sorrow of this present life; that which is after Easter the blessedness of our future state. . . . Hence it is that we spend the first in fasting and prayer; and in the second we give up fasting, and give ourselves up to praise.'[1] This is the spirit in which we should spend the first Sunday of this penitential time of year. The darkness of Lent has not closed in upon us, but the first shadows have reached us, and the Church, to denote that the time of rejoicing is over, now vests her priests in purple, not only on Sundays, but upon all days in the week which are not feasts of saints. The *Gloria in excelsis* is no longer sung on Sundays; the deacon dismisses the Faithful with the *Benedicamus Domino*;

[1] *Enarrations*, Ps. cxlviii. *Septuagesima*, p. 7.

and to mark in the most solemn manner possible to her, that as the Scripture says, ' Praise is unseemly in the mouth of sinners,' she, for the whole seven weeks of this penitential season, suspends the Angel-song of rejoicing, the Alleluia. The custom of, as it were, taking leave of the Alleluia on the eve of Septuagesima Sunday is one which has existed since the earliest centuries. We find two antiphons commemorative of it in a work of St. Cornelius of Compiègne in the ninth century. The Gothic Church of Spain and the Churches of Germany also have it. We give the following hymn from the Church of France of the thirteenth century :

Alleluia dulce carmen,
Vox perennis gaudii,
Alleluia laus suavis
Est choris cœlestibus,
Quam canunt Dei manentes
In domo per sæcula.

The sweet Alleluia-song, the word of endless joy, is the melody of heaven's choir, chanted by them that dwell for ever in the house of God.

Alleluia læta mater
Concivis Jerusalem,
Alleluia vox tuorum
Civium gaudentium ;
Exsules nos flere cogunt
Babylonis flumina.

O joyful mother ! O Jerusalem our City ! Alleluia is the language of thy happy citizens. The rivers of Babylon, where we poor exiles live, force us to weep.

Alleluia non meremur
In perenne psallere ;
Alleluia vox reatus
Cogit intermittere ;
Tempus instat quo peracta
Lugeamus crimina.

We are unworthy to sing a ceaseless Alleluia. Our sins force us to interrupt our Alleluia. The time is at hand when it behoves us to weep our crimes.

Unde laudando precamur
Te, beata Trinitas,
Ut tuum nobis videre
Pascha des in æthere,
Quo tibi læti canamus
Alleluia perpetim. Amen.

We therefore beseech Thee, whilst we praise Thee, O Blessed Trinity, that Thou grant us to come to that Easter of heaven, where we shall sing to Thee our joyful everlasting Alleluia.[1] Amen.

[1] *Septuagesima*, p. 30.

The lesson which the Church gives in the Matins of Septuagesima Sunday is from the third chapter of Genesis, which contains the history of the fall of man, in order to excite in her children a horror of sin, whereby death and all its consequences came into the world. In every succeeding day in the week she takes her lessons from the same Holy Book. The station for this Sunday is held in the Church of St. Laurence outside the walls. In the Introit we are called again to meditate upon death, the special punishment of sin, and encouraged to invoke the mercy of God.

The groans of death surrounded me, and the sorrows of hell encompassed me; and in my affliction I called upon the Lord, and He heard my voice from His holy temple.

Ps. I will love Thee, O Lord my strength: the Lord is my firmament, my refuge, and my deliverer.

The epistle is taken from the first of St. Paul to the Corinthians (ch. ix.): 'Brethren, know you not that they that run in the race all run indeed, but one receiveth a prize? So run that you may obtain. And every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things; and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible prize, but we an incorruptible one. I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty; I so fight, not as one beating the air: but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.' What words could the holy Apostle have used to put before us more forcibly the advantages of fasting and penance? In the first place he points out the striking difference which exists between the Christian athlete and the pagan, for with them but one receiveth the prize. With us it is not so, for to all those who strive and refrain themselves from all things God in His goodness gives a prize, and that an incorruptible one. And not only this, but *he*, the great

Apostle of the Gentiles, who had been converted by a special miracle of the Divine Bounty, and had been lifted up to revelations 'such as are not given to men to see'—he trembled as each one of us has reason to do, that if he neglected this means of grace his salvation would be imperilled.

The gospel is taken from St. Matthew (ch. xx.), where our Lord gives us the parable of the householder who went out early to hire labourers into his vineyard. This parable admits of more than one interpretation. In the sense in which our Lord uttered it no doubt it was intended for the Jews. The vineyard stood for the Church, the early labourers were the Jews under the Old Law, and the labourers of the eleventh hour the Gentiles, who under the New Law of Christ were to enter into the glorious fruits of the Gospel, though, unlike the chosen people, they had not borne the burthen of the day and the heats. The Church sees also another interpretation. All Christians are called to labour in their Master's vineyard. Some from their earliest days, in the morning of life; others only gain this grace, of the knowledge of the truth, in more advanced years. But to all who come—who respond to the Divine call—He holds out the same promise. He Himself, He says to the converted sinner, 'will be their exceeding great reward.' Therefore let no one despair, for even if called at the eleventh hour—like the penitent thief—he also will receive, even as the others, if he truly repent and responds to the Divine call, that reward which God has promised to all who put their trust in Him.

The Church, on Septuagesima Sunday and every day in the following week, puts before her children at Matins the history of the chastisement of the human race at the Deluge, and the building of the ark by which the just man Noah and his children were saved. The station for Sexagesima Sunday is held in the Basilica of St. Paul's outside the walls. The epistle is taken from St. Paul's second epistle to

the Corinthians (ch. xi.), in which he recounts the perils he underwent in the service of his Master. In the gospel, which is from St. Luke (ch. viii.), we read the parable of the sower 'who went out to sow his seed.' Our Lord Himself, as St. Gregory the Great remarks, explains to us the meaning of this parable, and the Church places it on this Sunday so that her children may reflect deeply on the Divine words and take to heart the lesson they convey. Let them, she urges, make use of this holy time of Lent, which is about to commence, to retire from the world and detach themselves from the thorns—that is, the cares and riches and pleasures of life—so that they may 'receive the seed in good ground and bring forth fruit in patience.'

In the office of Quinquagesima Sunday the Church gives the history of the call of Abraham from the twelfth chapter of Genesis. The Church is unceasing in her admiration for this holy patriarch, who showed such marvellous faith and docility to the Divine Will, and in these lessons she holds him out as a model to her children. The station for this Sunday is held in the Church of St. Peter on the Vatican. The epistle for this Sunday is from the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, that sublime sermon on charity in which the Apostle tells us that 'if he should have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and should have all faith, so that he could remove mountains and have not charity, he is nothing.' We are to learn from this sublime teaching, given to us on the last Sunday before Lent, that unless we have this charity—that is, love for God and man—in our hearts, this light in our souls, all we do in outward works of penance or alms-deeds is unavailing. The gospel is from St. Luke (ch. xviii.), in which our Lord foretells His going up to Jerusalem, to be followed by His bitter Passion, death, and resurrection. Let us, then—wiser than His disciples, who 'understood none of these things'—unite our hearts and wills and intentions with those of our

Divine Master, so that, by following humbly in His footsteps by the contemplation of His sufferings, we may be prepared to enter with Him into Paschal joys.

Shrove-tide succeeds Quinquagesima Sunday; and the Church, mindful of the excesses with which men (particularly, alas! in Catholic countries) keep, or rather desecrate, these last two days which precede Lent, invites her children to join her in special acts of prayer and reparation to the Divine Majesty for the sins of mankind. It was for this object that the devotion of the *Quarant'ore* was instituted, which, encouraged by St. Charles Borromeo and approved of by the Holy See, has since spread all over the world.

Lent

That the institution of Lent dates from the Apostolic times we know on the authority of several of the great Fathers of the Church. St. Jerome,[1] St. Leo the Great,[2] St. Cyril of Alexandria,[3] and St. Isidore of Seville[4] mention it in their works. Its duration of forty days is not only dictated by the example of our Lord Himself, but has authority in numberless instances given us in the Old Law. God, in His anger for the sins of men, chastised them for forty days and nights with the waters of the Deluge. Again for forty years God, in punishment of the ingratitude of the children of Israel, allowed them to wander in the desert. For forty days Moses (who typifies the Law) and Elias (who is the figure of the Prophets) were made to fast before they were allowed to enter into the presence of God, the first on Sinai and the second on Mount Horeb. All these were types, as the Apostle tells us, written for our instruction. The evidence in favour of fasting in the Sacred Scriptures is so

[1] *Epist. xxvii. ad Marcell.*
[2] *Serm.* ii. v. ix. *de Quadragesima.*
[3] *Homil. Paschal.*
[4] *De Eccl. Off.* lib. vi. cap. xix. *Liturgical Year: Lent.*

overwhelming that it is incredible that any Christian can seek to evade it. Not only did our Lord give us Himself the example of it, but He began His public preaching with the words, 'Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'; and again when condemning the hypocrisy of the Jews who disfigured their faces, 'so as to be seen by men,' He tells His disciples the manner in which they should fast in order to merit an eternal reward. The words of our Lord are absolute and final: 'Unless ye shall do penance, ye shall all likewise perish.'

Now penance consists in contrition of the soul and in mortification of the body; these two parts are essential to it. The *soul* has willed the sin; the body has frequently co-operated in its commission. Moreover, man is composed of both soul and body; both, then, should pay homage to their Creator. The body is to share with the soul either the delights of heaven or the torments of hell: there cannot, therefore, be any thorough Christian life, or any earnest penance, when the body does not take part in both with the soul.[1]

That the primitive Church understood the teaching of our Lord in this light is clear, not only from the continual allusions made to this practice of fasting and penance in the Acts and Epistles, but from the example of the early saints and the monks and anchorites of the desert: in short, from the unbroken record of the discipline of the Church from Apostolic times down to our own day.

But if we contrast the fasts of the primitive Christians, or even those of the mediæval Church, with our own, what a light is thrown on the sloth and indifference of the days in which we live! Fasting in the time of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Basil, and St. John Chrysostom included abstaining from wine. It also meant as late as the ninth or twelfth century a total abstinence from flesh meat from the first Sunday in Lent till Easter Sunday. Again, the early Christians followed

[1] *Ibid.*: *Lent*, p. 32.

the custom of the Jews in the Old Law, who, on days of fast, took but one meal, and that after sunset. Towards the middle of the twelfth and in the thirteenth centuries the custom grew of taking a collation, or slight meal, after the hour of None; that is, three o'clock in the afternoon. The voice of the Sovereign Pontiff has more than once made itself heard, lamenting, as the occasion arose for fresh dispensations, the degeneracy of the times which rendered them necessary. Benedict XIV., in a letter to the Bishops, tells them that 'the observance of Lent is the very badge of the Christian warfare.' By it we prove that we are not 'enemies of the Cross of Christ.' By it we avert the scourges of the Divine Justice, and gain strength against the 'princes of darkness.' Lent, then, is a time of warfare. Our enemies are those spoken of by St. John, 'the concupiscence of the eyes, and the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life.' By means of them, Satan tempted our Lord in the desert, and by His example He shows us the weapons we must take to subdue them. Again, the Scriptures tell us that 'Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert.' This also contains a great lesson for us, which the Church enforces by discouraging her children from frequenting balls, theatres, and other public places of amusement in Lent. To hear the voice of God, to 'become converted to Him,' as the Psalmist says, 'with our whole heart,' we must seek solitude. 'Therefore, behold, I will allure her, saith the Lord, and will lead her into the wilderness; and I will speak to her heart.'[1] The time of Lent had two other special offices or significations in the early ages of the Church. It was the time when public penitents, having done penance for their sins on Ash Wednesday, were separated from the communion of the faithful for forty days; and then, if their repentance was of a nature to satisfy the Bishop and presbyters that they were deserving of reconciliation, they were solemnly re-admitted into the Church on Maundy

[1] Osee, ch. ii.

Thursday. Likewise Lent was given over to the instruction of the catechumens, or such as were being initiated into the sacred mysteries, with a view to their receiving the Sacrament of Baptism at the feast of Easter. The liturgy retains in its sublime lessons from the Old and New Testament much that was intended primarily for their instruction.

Ash Wednesday [1]

The service begins on Ash Wednesday by the blessing of the Ashes. Let us, while we perform this outward act of humiliation, humble our hearts before God, and join with the priest in saying: 'O Almighty and Eternal God, who forgavest the Ninivites when they did penance in sackcloth and ashes, mercifully grant us so to imitate their penance that we may obtain pardon of our sins. Through,' etc.

The lesson at Mass is taken from the book of Joel (ch. ii.):

Thus saith the Lord: Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil. Who knoweth but He will return, and forgive, and leave a blessing behind Him; sacrifice and oblation to the Lord your God.

This teaching of the prophet, that our repentance must be heartfelt, that it is to be done towards God, and not for men, and finally that it must be accompanied by an entire change of heart, is again brought out in the gospel, which is taken from the Gospel of St. Matthew (ch. vi.):

At that time, Jesus said to His disciples: When you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear to men to fast. Amen I say to you, they have received

[1] Lent, properly speaking, begins on the first Sunday after Ash Wednesday.

their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret will reward thee.

The station in Rome for the First Sunday in Lent is held in the patriarchal Basilica of St. John Lateran. The Introit, Gradual and Tract, and Communion are all taken from the 90th Psalm, as if Holy Church wished to show that these glorious words embodied all her aspirations for her children during this holy season.

He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High shall abide under the protection of the God of Heaven.

He shall say to the Lord: Thou art my protector, and my refuge; my God, in Him I will trust.

. . . . .

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee.

For He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

. . . . .

Because he hath hoped in me I will deliver him: I will protect him because he hath known my name.

He shall cry to me, and I will hear him: I am with him in his tribulation.

I will deliver him, and I will glorify him. I will fill him with length of days; and I will show him my salvation.

In the gospel, which is taken from that of St. Matthew (ch. iv. v.), we read the history of the temptation of our Lord in the desert.

The week-days of Lent, unlike Advent or any other part of the year, have each a proper Mass. Every day our Missal gives us a lesson from the Old Testament as well as the gospel taken from some portion of the history of our Lord; so that by following these daily we shall be able to enter into

the spirit of the Church at this holy season. The gospel of Monday for the first week in Lent is taken from the chapter of St. Matthew (xxv.) in which our Lord speaks of the Last Judgment, and how the Son of man, having separated the sheep from the goats, shall say to the former, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father . . . . For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; thirsty, and you gave me to drink; a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you clothed me; sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me.'

The gospel of the first Tuesday in Lent is taken from that of St. Matthew, in which our Lord reproaches the Jews for the use they made of the Temple; and said, 'It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.'

The Church puts these two gospel-teachings of our Lord on two successive days in the beginning of Lent with a special object. It is to point out to us that, if we wish to spend Lent profitably to our souls, we must join the practice of prayer and almsgiving to that of fasting. 'Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold' (Tob. xii. 8). Outward works of penance, such as maceration of the body, or abstinence or fasting, have no power of satisfying for sin or pleasing God unless accompanied with that inward disposition—that love of God and our neighbour—of which prayer and almsgiving are the natural outcome. In these three practices, therefore, of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, the Church sees a cure for the evils under which all humanity groans. We have all sinned; we must all do penance. If our constitutions are no longer capable of the prolonged fasts of our forefathers we can make up for it by abundant almsgiving, and this we can ever do, in proportion to our means. The widow's mite, in the sight of God, was as pleasing as the rich men's gifts, who out of their abundance poured out their gifts.

Lastly, we can all pray. Our Lord would have us pray always, and this we can do by constantly lifting up our hearts to Him and referring by a *direct intention* all our actions to His greater honour and glory. *Laborare est orare.* To work is to pray, if our hearts are joined to His while our hands go about our daily duties. Especially does Holy Church encourage us to go daily to Mass during the season of Lent. At this august sacrifice He is offered up in an unbloody manner whose death on the Cross we are so soon to commemorate. In the lessons likewise of the Mass, in Lent, she gives us each day passages drawn from the Old Testament in which the faith of the great seers and patriarchs of the Old Law, their fasts, their trials, and their triumphs are told for our instruction and our encouragement. In the gospels she shows us how the priests and Rulers of the Jewish nation are plotting to take the life of the most innocent Lamb of God, and how He, whilst ever pursuing His course of teaching and healing, and doing good to all men, is gradually drawn into their toils.

The station for the Second Sunday in Lent is in the Church of St. Mary in Dominica. The epistle is taken from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians (ch. iv.). Those words, 'This is the will of God, your sanctification,' should give us much food for reflection. The gospel is taken from St. Matthew (ch. xvii.), and gives us the history of our Saviour's glorious Transfiguration. Our Lord showed Himself in His glory to the three Apostles, in order that the recollection of this vision of joy and beauty should support them in the trials which they were to undergo. The Church puts the history of it before us with the same intention. We also are undergoing trials—trials to flesh and blood. For are not fasting, mortification, and prayer opposed to the very instincts of our poor fallen nature? Let us, then, take to heart the lesson it conveys. We are also, like the Apostles, going up to Calvary. But let us console ourselves

with thinking that 'what is small and light of our tribulation worketh for us hereafter a great weight of glory.' St. Peter in his ecstasy cried out, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here,' but Holy Writ says: 'He knew not what he was saying.' In this world (our Lord tells us so Himself) we shall have distress; but 'take confidence,' He says, 'I have overcome the world.' In this world our glimpse of Tabor is short and fleeting. In the next it will be permanent and never-ending.

The Third Sunday of Lent was called in the primitive Church 'Scrutiny Sunday,' because on this day the catechumens who were to be admitted to Baptism at Easter were examined. The lesson is taken from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (ch. v.), and the gospel from that of St. Luke (ch. xi.), in which our Lord cast out the devil who was dumb.

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is known in the Sacred Liturgy as *Lætare* Sunday, from the first word of the Introit. It is also Mid-Lent Sunday.[1] Accordingly the Church interrupts her Lenten mourning in order to rejoice with her children that the seventy years of captivity are half over. Yet a little while and the captives shall return to Jerusalem. Accordingly, the organ (which, wherever it is possible to dispense with it, has been silent since the beginning of Lent) again resounds in her churches. The purple vestments of her ministers are exchanged for rose-coloured ones, and the deacon resumes his dalmatic and the subdeacon his tunic. The beautiful ceremony of blessing the golden rose, which has been handed down from the eleventh century, takes place in Rome on this Sunday. The liturgy of the Mass breathes throughout the same spirit of joy and exultation as that with which the Introit begins:

[1] The Thursday preceding is actually Mid-Lent, but the Church keeps the celebration of the day on the Sunday following.

Rejoice, O Jerusalem, and meet together, all you who love her; rejoice exceedingly, you who have been in sorrow, that you may leap for joy and be satiated with comfort from her breasts.

Ps. I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: We shall go into the house of the Lord.

The epistle is taken from the fourth chapter of St. Paul to the Galatians, in which he explains that Abraham had two sons, one by a bond-woman and one by a free-woman, 'but that Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother. . . . But what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son, for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free, by the freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free.' Glorious words in which St. Paul announces to the Gentiles the unspeakable happiness of their lot in comparison to that of the Jews, and which the Church now addresses to *us*. In the Gradual we read:

I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: Let us go into the house of the Lord.

V. Let peace be in thy strength, and abundance in thy towers.

The gospel is according to the sixth chapter of St. John, in which we read of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Again the Church invites us to rejoice with her at this miraculous feast in the desert, in which she sees a type of the heavenly banquet which our Lord was shortly afterwards to institute, by which He gives Himself whole and undivided to each one of her children.

Although the time of Lent is not so rich in great feasts as others in the ecclesiastical year, there are several in March which should excite our special devotion.

On the 17th is kept the feast of the great St. Patrick—the Apostle of Ireland.

The 19th of March is dedicated to the feast of St. Joseph, whom Pope Pius IX. constituted Patron of the Universal

Church. The name of Joseph, the holy spouse of Mary, the foster-father of Jesus, on whom the shadow of the Eternal Father seems specially to rest, is dear to every Catholic heart. '*Ite ad Joseph.*' Let us go to him, with great confidence, in all our wants and necessities, and we shall never go in vain. St. Joseph is the special Patron of family life, and spiritual writers tell us he should be invoked by all who wish to acquire an interior spirit. The feast of the great Patriarch of the West, St. Benedict, of whom St. Gregory said that 'he was filled with the spirit of all the just,' is kept on March the 21st.

On the 25th the Church solemnizes the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, the day on which, at the *Fiat* of the humble Virgin, 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.' Mary accomplished by her obedience the salvation of man, which had been lost by the disobedience of our first mother. 'For Eve,' as St. Justin tells us, 'being a virgin and undefiled, conceiving the word that was from the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death; but the Virgin Mary, taking faith and joy when the angel told her the good tidings that the Spirit of the Lord should come upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadow her, and therefore the Holy One that was born of her was Son of God, answered: "Be it done to me according to thy word."[1]

The Church, commemorating the Virginity of Mary, whereby she was found worthy to become the mother of the Incarnate God, rejoices at the multitude of her children who henceforth will walk in the footsteps of Her who is their mother and their model.

Introit

All the rich among the people shall entreat thy countenance. After her shall virgins be brought to the King: her neighbours shall be brought to thee in joy and gladness.

[1] St. Justin Martyr A.D. 120–165), *Tryph.* 100.

Ps. My heart hath uttered a good word: I will speak my works to the Lord.

The epistle is taken from Isaias (ch. vii.), in which he prophesies: 'Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel.'

In the gospel we read, from the first chapter of St. Luke, the sublime narrative how the Incarnation of the Son of man was accomplished. Let us join with Holy Church, whilst rejoicing over this glorious mystery, in invoking the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, 'that what of ourselves we cannot obtain we may receive through her intercession.'

The last fortnight of Lent, beginning with Passion Sunday, the Church gives up to the contemplation of the sufferings and death of our Redeemer. Jesus is about to deliver Himself into the hands of sinful men, who are plotting to take His life. He gives Himself, as He tells us by His prophet, because He willed it, but the Church nevertheless mourns with her Divine Spouse not only over the crimes of the 'perfidious Jews,' but over the sins of her own children, who by their ingratitude and wickedness crucify our Saviour anew. She would remind us that we are bought at a great price; for as St. Peter says, 'Know ye that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled.'

On Passion Sunday the crucifixes, pictures, and statues are all veiled in the churches, first of all to commemorate how, as the gospel of the day relates, our Lord hid from the Jews, who wished to stone Him, and secondly to denote by the sad aspect of her altars how she mourns with Him. The station for this day is held in the Basilica of St. Peter.

In the epistle, which is taken from the ninth chapter of

St. Paul to the Hebrews, we are again reminded how we owe our redemption to the precious blood of our Saviour shed for us on the Cross. In the gospel, which is according to St. John (ch. viii.), our Lord once more declares His Divine mission to His ungrateful people, whose hearts, more hardened than ever against Him, are now preparing to commit the crime which will be consummated on Mount Calvary.

Friday in Passion Week is dedicated to the feast of the Seven Dolours. On this day the Church commemorates how the words of holy Simeon to Mary were fulfilled: 'And thine own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts shall be revealed.' Seven times, we are told, the loving heart of Mary was pierced by this sword:

On hearing this prophecy, when the sufferings her Divine Son was to undergo were interiorly revealed to her.

At the flight with Jesus into Egypt.

At the three days' loss, 'when the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem and His parents knew it not.'

When she met Jesus carrying His Cross.

At the Crucifixion; the taking down from the Cross; and the Burial of Jesus.

This feast was first instituted by Theodoric, the holy Archbishop of Cologne, in 1423. Benedict XIII. decreed it should be kept by the whole Church. With the Vespers of the following day commences Holy Week, which the Church devotes exclusively to the commemoration of the Passion and death of our Saviour; it is fitting, therefore, that the day preceding should be given to honouring the sorrowful compassion of His Blessed Mother.

'Mary stood by the Cross,' the Scripture tells us, but not as a spectator, however faithful and devoted. She was there in her official capacity as Mother of the Incarnate God. She was there also as Mother, in the future, of all generations of men, whom our Lord committed to her charge in the person

of St. John. Let us then, as we say the *Stabat Mater*, the liturgical prayer of the Church in honour of the sorrows of Mary which is said by the priest at Mass, invoke her intercession that these days may be of great profit and grace to us, and to all those for whom her Son died.

On the Saturday before Palm Sunday, the sixth day, as St. John tells us, before the Pasch, it is the custom for the Pope to distribute large alms to the poor in memory of the precious spikenard which on this day Mary Magdalen poured on the feet of Jesus, when He was staying in Bethany in the house of Simon.

Palm Sunday

On this day Holy Week—which St. John Chrysostom calls 'the great week,' because of the great mysteries which are then celebrated—commences. In the early ages this week was kept with an austerity that is almost incomprehensible to us now. St. Epiphanius mentions that some of the Christians observed a strict fast from Monday morning till dawn on Easter Sunday. Many passed two and three consecutive days without food, and the general custom was to fast from Maundy Thursday evening to Easter Sunday.[1] For many centuries cessation from servile work was customary in Holy Week. The thought of the sufferings and death of Jesus was the one pervading thought. The Divine Office and prayer were the sole occupation of the people.'[2]

It was customary also in this week for Christian Princes (as we read in St. John Chrysostom with regard to the Emperor Theodosius) to release prisoners and give manumission to slaves. 'In honour of our Lord's Passion and Resurrection' (another Saint tells us) 'the Emperors humbly

[1] This is not remarkable when we reflect that many Christians in the East, and in the Greek Church, observe this fast at the present time.

[2] *Liturgical Year: Passiontide*, p. 6.

withhold the exercise of their sovereign justice, and, laying aside the severity of their laws, they grant pardon to great numbers of criminals. Their intention in this is to imitate the Divine Goodness by their own exercise of clemency during these days when the world owes its salvation to the Divine mercy.' In the Code of Justinian, which prohibits all law proceedings during Holy Week, this exception is made: 'That it shall nevertheless be permitted to give slaves their liberty; in such manner that the legal acts necessary for their emancipation shall not be counted as contravening this present enactment.' Again, we are told by St. John Chrysostom that many persons in this week were accustomed to double their alms and charities to the poor, in order to make some return to the Divine generosity which at this time was poured out upon them. In some of the documents of the Middle Ages we find mention made of this week as that of the Reign of Christ. Such an event, it is said, took place under the reign of Christ: '*Regnante Domino nostro Jesu Christo.*'[1]

In the blessing of the palms, and the procession which follows it, Holy Church commemorates how, as the Gospel tells us, a great multitude went out to meet Jesus 'and spread their garments in the way, and others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way, and the multitude that went before and that followed cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.' Though the Church joins in the song of praise and glory to her Divine Spouse, she knows that many of the fickle multitude will soon join another crowd which four days later will cry out for His death, so during Divine Office and Mass she ceases not to lament His bitter death and betrayal.

The Tract, from the 21st Psalm, is as follows:

[1] *Liturgical Year: Passiontide* p. 8.

O God, my God, look upon me: why hast Thou forsaken me?

V. Far from my salvation are the words of my sins.

V. O my God, I shall cry by day and Thou wilt not hear, and by night, and it shall not be imputed as folly in me.

V. But Thou dwellest in the holy place, O Thou the praise of Israel.

V. In Thee have our Fathers hoped; they hoped and Thou hast delivered them.

V. They have cried out to Thee and they were saved. They trusted in Thee and were not confounded.

V. But I am a worm and no man: the reproach of men and the outcast of the people.

V. All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips and wagged the head.

V. He hoped in the Lord [they say], let Him deliver him: let Him save him, seeing he delighted in Him.

During the Passion of our Lord, according to the Gospel of St. Matthew, which is read during Mass, the congregation hold the palms which they received in their hands. On Monday in Holy Week the prophecy of Isaias (ch. l.) is read in the lesson at Mass:

In those days Isaias said: The Lord hath opened my ear, *making known His will to me*, and I do not resist: I have not gone back. I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them. I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me and spit upon me. The Lord God is my helper: therefore I am not confounded. He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me? . . . He that hath walked in darkness, and hath no light, let him hope in the name of the Lord, and lean upon his God.

In the gospel, which is taken from the twelfth chapter of St. John, we read how Mary Magdalen, 'taking a pound of ointment of right spikenard, of great price, anointed the feet of Jesus with it,' and how our Lord, far from disapproving of her action, said that 'wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memory of her.' Holy Church sees in the

Magdalen the type of the repentant sinner, and never ceases to hold out the treatment she received at the hands of her merciful Saviour as an encouragement to those who, having wandered into the paths of sin, seek to return to Him.

On Tuesday in Holy Week the Church commemorates at Mass the Passion of our Lord, which is read from the Gospel of St. Mark.

On Wednesday the Passion of our Lord according to St. Luke is read at Mass.

On the afternoon of this day, Tenebræ—that is, Matins and Lauds—of Maundy Thursday are sung publicly in all the churches. The psalms sung at Tenebræ are taken from those in which David prophesies the treatment the Messiah will receive from the hands of ungrateful man. The first Nocturn is followed by passages from Jeremiah in which he laments over the desolation which is to come over the holy city of Jerusalem—hence called his Lamentations. The lessons of the second Nocturn are from St. Augustine on the Passion. The ritual which the Church observes on these occasions is as follows:—A large triangular candlestick is placed in the sanctuary, holding fifteen candles; these candles, as likewise the six candles on the altar, are of yellow wax, as at Masses for the dead. One of these candles is put out after every psalm, with the exception of the one on the top of the triangle. The six candles on the altar are extinguished whilst the *Benedictus* is being sung at Lauds. After this the candle is taken from the triangle to the epistle side of the altar, and held there while the choir repeats the antiphon after the canticle. It is then hidden behind the altar whilst the *Miserere* is said. A noise is then made in the choir, the candle is brought back on 'o the altar, and Tenebræ concludes.

The desertion of the Apostles and disciples of our Lord is signified in the ceremony by the extinction of all the candles, even of those on the altar. The candle left burning

on the triangle typifies Christ the Light of the World, who though hidden is not extinguished. His burial is figured by its withdrawal behind the altar; the noise that is heard throughout the church signifies the confusion of nature—the earth-quaking and the splitting of rocks—at His death; and the return of the candle, which once more throws beams of light on the altar, to His peaceful return as Conqueror of death, and the shadows of darkness.

Maundy Thursday

On this day the Church commemorates the institution of the Holy Eucharist, and also of the Priesthood of the New Law. In the primitive ages it was the day when, after six weeks of unremitting penance, and practice of austerity, public penitents were solemnly re-admitted into the Church, and allowed to partake once more of the Bread of Life with the rest of the faithful. It is also the day in which the solemn blessing of the Holy Oils takes place.

Maundy Thursday in the Old Law is the first day of the Azymes, or feast of the unleavened bread. On this day, the Gospel tells us, Jesus, having spent the night, as the four preceding ones, at Bethany, sent two of His disciples, Peter and John, to prepare the Pasch for Him in Jerusalem. In Peter, Holy Church sees a type of faith—for was he not the first to recognise and confess the Divinity of Christ?—in John the type of love. It was fitting, therefore, that they should have been chosen to prepare that feast which faith reveals to us through love. Again, we are told there is much significance in the words our Divine Lord uses when giving His commands to His disciples. The room He asks for is to be large; it is also to be furnished. Charity, we are told, love for God and man, makes our hearts large. An ardent desire to receive Him, a knowledge of our own misery and nothingness, this is the preparation, the furniture He would ask for in the room we are to prepare for Him in our hearts.

His orders are carried out: 'And when evening was come He cometh with the twelve.' Together, the Scriptures tell us, they partook of the meal prescribed by the Law. And when it was ended our Lord, rising, girded Himself with a towel and began to wash the feet of His disciples. We read how Peter in his humility objected, and our Lord's explanation: 'He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet.' They were all clean except the Iscariot; they were not in mortal sin. But to be worthy of receiving Jesus into our hearts we must strive to cleanse our souls even from the smallest sins, which are like the dust which collects on the feet of him who travels on the highway. It is with these words of love and warning that Jesus gives Himself to His disciples under the form of bread and wine, showing forth, as St. Paul said, the death of the Lord till He come. And then—as this mystery was not to be for one time or one age, but for all time, even to the consummation of the world—our Lord institutes the order of Priesthood, in the persons of His Apostles, in those words: 'Do this in commemoration of Me.'

The Mass on Maundy Thursday is therefore one of the most solemn of the year. The Church decorates her sanctuaries and altars with flowers and lights, and her priests wear white vestments. As soon as the *Gloria in excelsis* is intoned, the bells are rung, and this is continued till the end of the hymn, after which they are no longer rung till High Mass on Holy Saturday. The Church by this silence denotes her mourning for her Lord and Spouse, and also commemorates the desertion of the Apostles, who are the heralds of Christ and thus typified by the bells which summon the faithful to the House of God. In memory of the traitorous kiss of Judas the *Pax* is omitted at Mass on this day. The Introit is as follows:

We ought to glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in

whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection : by whom we have been saved and delivered.

Ps. May God have mercy on us, and bless us: may His countenance shine upon us, and may He have mercy on us. Amen.

The epistle is taken from the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, in which the Apostle rebukes the Christians for the abuses into which they have fallen, and relates to them the history of the Last Supper. In the gospel, from the thirteenth chapter of St. John, we read how our Divine Lord washed His disciples' feet on this day. Two hosts are consecrated at Mass on Maundy Thursday : one host is received by the priest, and the other is reserved for the following day. 'The reason for this is that to-morrow the Church suspends the daily sacrifice. Such is the impression produced by the anniversary of our Saviour's death that the Church dares not to renew upon her altars the immolation which was then offered on Calvary ; or rather, her renewal of it will be by the fixing all her thoughts on the terrible scene of that first Good Friday.'[1]

After Mass is over, the Blessed Sacrament is carried in procession to a side-chapel previously prepared for its reception, and the Faithful are invited to take their turn in watching before our Lord till the time when He is offered up on the altar in the Mass of the Presanctified on the following day. The ceremony of the washing of the feet was common all over the world in the Middle Ages, and was constantly performed by many holy Kings and Queens, such as St. Louis of France, St. Margaret, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary. It is now still done in Rome by the Sovereign Pontiff, at Vienna by the Austrian Emperor, and in many cathedrals and religious houses. After Mass and Vespers are

[1] *Liturgical Year : Passiontide*, p. 373.

over, the altar is stripped of all its cloths and ornaments whilst the choir chant the antiphon:

Ant. They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture they cast lots,

followed by the 21st Psalm.

The office of Tenebræ—that is, Matins and Lauds—for Good Friday is chanted publicly in the afternoon in the churches as on the previous day.

The hour between eleven and midnight, which our Lord spent in Gethsemane in His agony and sweat of blood, is known to the devout as the 'holy hour'; and many are accustomed to spend it, not only this day, but on every Thursday of the year, in prayer and loving commiseration with the sufferings of our Divine Saviour, Who Himself has encouraged the devotion in the words: 'Could you not watch one hour with Me?'

Good Friday

Holy Church shows us by the outward tokens of her altars stripped of all their ornaments, her statues veiled, her priests vested in black, how her heart mourns with her Divine Spouse. The service on this day begins with the prophetic vision of Osee, who foretells God's merciful designs in favour of the Gentiles, who were dead, but with Christ in three days will rise again. After this is read a lesson from Exodus, in which Moses gives the law to the Israelites concerning the slaying of the Paschal Lamb—the type of the Son of God—the Lamb which was to be slain on Mount Calvary for the redemption of man. After this the Passion of our Lord according to St. John is read. This is followed by the solemn prayers of the Church for the whole world. Christ has died for all mankind and is the Mediator with God the Father; hence the significance of the Church's intercession. These prayers are followed by the ceremony

known as the Veneration of the Cross. Jesus has been nailed to the Cross and has died on it. It is the instrument of His death, and therefore of man's salvation. In the words of St. Paul, 'it is a stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles,' but to the Christian it is the emblem of all he loves, the anchor of his hopes. This ceremony had its origin in the fourth century, when, St. Helena having discovered the True Cross, it was publicly offered to the veneration of the Faithful every Good Friday in Jerusalem. Three centuries later the custom was introduced in other Churches of venerating the Cross. Not the true one, indeed, which in its entirety could be only in one place, but a representation in which they could honour the true one, in the same way that the honour paid to the wood consecrated by the blood of Jesus was really given to our Lord Himself.

Whilst the Cross is being venerated by the clergy and laity, the *Improperia*—that is, the Reproaches (taken from Jeremias) made by the Son of God to the Jews—are intoned. These touching prayers, which were used by the Greek Church as far back as the fifth century, are still sung partly in Greek. After this ceremony is over the Blessed Sacrament is brought solemnly back in procession from the side-chapel whither it was taken the previous day, whilst the *Vexilla Regis* is sung. The Mass of the Presanctified is then offered up, the prayers of which will be found in the Missal. Vespers for Good Friday are then sung, which concludes the morning service. The devotion of the Three Hours, in honour of the three hours' agony of our Lord on the Cross, begun by a holy Jesuit, Fr. Messia, in the end of the seventeenth century is [illegible] churches both on the Continent and in this country. But whether spent in this manner or in the solitude of our chambers, these hours in which our Lord hung from the Cross, suffering and dying for *us*, are hours incomparably precious to the Christian soul.

As the Word of God tells us, 'In an acceptable time I have heard thee, and in the day of salvation I have helped thee.' 'There never has been since the beginning of the world an acceptable time such as this Good Friday. The passion of our Lord covers up entirely the multitude of sins committed throughout the world, and the dark moments from the sixth to the ninth hour are so beautiful in the eyes of the Eternal Father that He cannot remember man's transgression. He can only look on the face of His Christ. . . . Good Friday, then, is an acceptable time and Calvary a chosen spot for the miracles of God's mercy, far beyond the waters of Jordan, far beyond the Pool of Siloe, or Solomon's Temple. Our Lord said of Solomon's Temple: "My eyes shall be open, and my ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place. For I have chosen and have sanctified this place, that my name may be there for ever, and my eyes and my heart may remain there perpetually" (2 Paralip. vii.).'[1]

From His Cross as from a pulpit, as St. Bernard tells us, Jesus preaches truths so solemn, so far-reaching that the world has never been able, do what it would, to escape the consequences of them. Jesus preaches to us by His silence; also by His example; again by the seven words He spoke to us from the Cross. First by His silence. During the whole of His sacred Passion the silence of Jesus is one of the mysteries on which the Evangelists dwell. Jesus was silent: *Jesus autem tacebat.* Again the Scripture says: 'From the third to the ninth hour Jesus was silent.' Silence, then, is one of the ways of carrying the Cross with Jesus. To hear His voice in our hearts, to be led by His interior guidance, we must be silent. We must enter into the cloud with Him —the darkness that surrounds Calvary. We must shut out the delusive brightness of the world, we must make a solitude around us that He may come to us. Secondly, He preaches

[1] Father Gallwey, *Watches of the Passion*, ii 332.

to us by His example. From Him we are to learn how to be crucified. From His Divine example we are to learn patience, love of God and man, resignation to the Heavenly Will. Of Him it is said by the Prophet: 'The Lord hath opened my ear, making known His will to me, and I do not resist: I have not gone back. I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them.' Jesus had declared that He had come to give man a new law. The law of love and forgiveness is to reign where before was only known the law of revenge, the eye for the eye, the tooth for the tooth. All this Jesus teaches us by His example on the Cross. Thirdly, He teaches us by His words. Let us listen to them attentively, let us not allow one word to escape us, for His words 'are spirit and love, teaching little ones.' And observe especially that they are all words of mercy. He prays for His persecutors and makes excuses to His Heavenly Father for them. The thief has but to say one word of compunction, of acknowledgment of his guilt, and of faith in the Son of God, and Jesus consoles him with the words, 'To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.' So that He should have omitted nothing, and thus be able to say with the Prophet, 'What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard that I have not done?' He gives Mary, His Blessed Mother, to St. John. For, as St. Bernard says, 'The Passion of Christ did not suffice; His Mother must be crucified.' Her loving heart, which was one with Him, must also be pierced. She must share His sacrifice. As St. Paul said, 'I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ,' so does the compassion of our Lady fill up something that is wanting to the Passion of Jesus. And now 'all is consummated.' Jesus is abandoned by His Heavenly Father; with a loud cry He gives up the ghost.

The service of Tenebræ, or Matins and Lauds, for Holy Saturday is celebrated on the afternoon of Good Friday.

Holy Saturday

The usage of the primitive Church required that there should be no Mass on Holy Saturday; the Church mourned with Jesus in the tomb. But towards the middle of the eleventh century a change was made in the ritual of this day, and by an indulgence, for which our greater weakness is responsible, the Church allows us at Mass a foretaste of the Paschal joys. Mass is preceded by the solemn blessing of fire and incense, also of the font and the Paschal candle. Jesus said that 'by His death He would make all things new.' And so the Church, which with the Divine Spouse rises to newness of life, gives a fresh blessing every year to the 'creatures of God,' such as fire, water, and the incense which is to be used on her altars. It is also usual for Catholics to have their houses blessed on this day, whenever it is possible. After these ceremonies the twelve prophecies regarding the Jewish people and the Gentiles are read in the church. In the primitive Church the solemn baptism of the catechumens (for whose instruction, primarily, the prophecies were read) took place at this time. The litanies are then recited, after which Mass is sung. The bells are once more rung during the *Gloria in excelsis*, which is chanted with the utmost solemnity; the song of the angels, the Alleluia, is again heard; but our Lord has not yet risen, and His disciples, who hereafter are to preach the Gospel throughout the world, are in hiding in Jerusalem. Accordingly, the symbol of faith, the *Credo*, is not sung till the following day. The Apostles are sitting, as the Scripture tells us, with closed doors for fear of the Jews. The words of Jesus have been fulfilled. 'All you shall be scandalised in me this night. For it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed."' The faith of one only, the ever-blessed Mother, has never faltered. In Mary's heart on Holy Saturday was enclosed

the faith of the whole world. For this reason, as an everlasting testimony of her, the Church has dedicated the Saturdays throughout the year to her honour.

Eastertide

Following the example of our Divine Saviour, and led by the same Spirit, we have spent the last forty days in the desert. We have fasted as much as we were able, we have sought as far as possible to detach ourselves from earthly pleasures and amusements; we have prayed, we have given alms. And these practices of penance have not been of an outward character only. They have been accompanied with true inward dispositions of love, of contrition, and compunction of heart. We have done them, in short, in the spirit of the penitent thief—a spirit of submission to the will of God as manifested to us through the ordinances of His Church. We have said from our hearts that we were suffering *justly*. More—far more—have we deserved to suffer in punishment for our sins. But we have looked at the Crucifix. We have taken comfort in the contemplation of the sufferings of our Saviour. If we have done too little, He has done more than was necessary to redeem a thousand worlds, and he has done it *for us*.

We have followed Him with loving eyes and sorrowing hearts from his agony in the garden of Gethsemane to the judgment-seat of Pilate; we have stood close to Him, by the side of Mary in his scourging at the pillar, at His crowning with thorns. In spirit we have been with him in the carrying of His Cross, and finally at His bitter death upon it. And if, as was fitting, our hearts were wrung by the sight of His sufferings—if that thought, 'He loved *me* and was delivered up for *me*,' has sunk deeply into them—we shall now rejoice with great joy in contemplating the glories of our Jesus risen from the dead. 'He is truly risen.' Death shall no longer have dominion over Him. Our souls,

purified by the exercises of prayer and fasting, have become worthy of being admitted into the Divine secrets. They have been illuminated so as to be capable of sharing the joys of the saints and angels of heaven and of the Church militant on earth. 'Eastertide belongs,' Dom Guéranger tells us,[1] 'to the Illuminative Life; nay, it is the most important part of that Life, for it not only manifests, as the last four seasons of the liturgical year have done, the humiliations and sufferings of the man-God: it shows Him to us in all His glory; it gives us to see Him expressing, in His own sacred Humanity, the highest degree of the creature's transformation into his God.' 'Of all the seasons of the liturgical year Eastertide is by far the richest in mystery. We might even say that Easter is the summit of the mystery of the sacred Liturgy. The Christian who is happy enough to enter with his whole mind and heart into the knowledge and the love of the Paschal mystery has reached the very centre of the supernatural life. Hence it is that the Church uses every effort in order to effect this; what she has hitherto done was all intended as a preparation for Easter. The holy longings of Advent, the sweet joys of Christmas, the severe truths of Septuagesima, the contrition and penance of Lent, the heartrending sight of the Passion —all were given us as preliminaries, as paths, to the sublime and glorious Pasch, which is now ours.[2] Hence St. Gregory the Great tells us that as the most sacred part of the temple was called the Holy of the Holies, so this feast is called the Feast of Feasts, or the Solemnity of Solemnities. Fifty days does the Church devote to the joyful commemoration of her risen Saviour. Not one day of fasting is allowed to mar the completeness of these days, or take away the contemplation of the Faithful from the glory of Him who has risen—the Conqueror and King. 'Can the children of the

[1] *Liturgical Year: Paschal Time*, p. 27.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 15.

Bridegroom mourn,' holy Church seems to say, 'as long as the Bridegroom is with them?' Not only was fasting abrogated, but we read in the Councils of the primitive Church that for the six days following Easter Sunday no servile work was performed. The Council of Macon decreed,[1] 'Let no one work during these days, but let all come together to sing the Easter hymns, and assist at the daily Sacrifice, and praise our Creator and Redeemer, in the evening, morning, and mid-day.' The same rules are laid down in the year 813 by the Council of Mayence, and in 845 by the Council of Meaux. In Spain we find an edict issued in the seventh century to the same effect by the Kings Receswind and Wamba. The Council of Constance in 1094 reduced the number of days from six to two—Monday and Tuesday in Easter week. The night office of Easter Sunday, in consequence of the primitive observance which dedicated the night of Holy Saturday to prayer and the administration of Baptism, is limited to one Nocturn, so that the canticles with which the Church welcomes the Resurrection of the 'true Light' may be sung at the dawning of the sunrise. It begins with the joyous Invitatory, 'The Lord hath truly risen. Alleluia.' After the three psalms are sung, the gospel of the day, followed by the three lessons from St. Gregory, are recited, and the office concludes with a solemn *Te Deum*.

Formerly the station for Easter Sunday in Rome was kept at St. Mary Major's, but it is now held in St. Peter's.

The antiphon sung by the choir while the water (newly blessed) is taken from the font to be used at the *Asperges* is as follows:

I saw water flowing from the right side of the temple, Alleluia; and all to whom that water came were saved, and they shall say: Alleluia, Alleluia.

Ps. Praise the Lord, because He is good; because His mercy endureth for ever.

[1] *Ibid.* p. 206.

The epistle is from St. Paul (1 Cor. v.):

Brethren, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new paste, as you are unleavened. For Christ our Pasch is sacrificed. Therefore let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Christ our Pasch, the spotless Lamb of God, is sacrificed. To understand this allusion fully we must go back to the history of the Jews. The Pasch, as the Scriptures tell us, is 'the Phase or the Passage of the Lord.' It was a day of vengeance on God's enemies, as He tells us Himself: 'I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and will kill every first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments.' (Exod. xii.) So that the Pasch is a day of terrible justice upon the enemies of God, but for that very reason it is a day of deliverance for Israel. The Lamb is slain; but the immolation is the signal of Redemption to the holy people of Israel. Accordingly, from the beginning of the history of the chosen people, the lamb has been looked upon as the type of the Redeemer. We read of it in the history of Abel, who offered up his fairest lamb to the Lord; in that of Abraham, who, when prepared to sacrifice his son, was told to take a ram as the substitute; to the Paschal lamb, which was to be 'without blemish,' whose blood was to protect the people of Israel from the destroying Angel, and whose flesh was to be eaten by each one of them. In all these sacrifices we see a type of Christ, the true Lamb of God shedding His blood for man and giving His Flesh to be eaten 'for the life of the world.' And thus Isaias cries out in his inspired prayer: 'Send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the ruler of the world.' When the time was ripe and the mystery of the Incarnation had been accomplished, St. John, the great Precursor, proclaims the advent of the Messiah in the same words: 'Behold the Lamb of God! Behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world.'

St. Paul, then, in his epistle invites us to this new feast. It is one in which no other food is put before us but the flesh of the Son of God. But before we come we must 'purge out the old leaven.' We must prepare our wedding garments; they must be made 'white in the blood of the Lamb,' and thus we may ask with great confidence to be admitted to this heavenly Banquet, and to join in the heavenly canticle which is ever being sung: 'The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction.'

The following beautiful sequence—so called because it is a continuation of the Alleluia—is said every day during the Octave:

Sequence

Victimæ Paschali laudes
Immolent Christiani.
Agnus redemit oves:
Christus innocens Patri
Reconciliavit peccatores.

Let Christians offer to the Paschal Victim the sacrifice of praise. The Lamb hath redeemed the sheep: the innocent Christ has reconciled sinners to His Father.

Mors et vita duello
Conflixere mirando:
Dux vitæ mortuus
Regnat vivus.

Death and Life fought against each other in a wondrous duel. The King of Life was put to death, yet He reigns alive.

Dic nobis, Maria,
Quid vidisti in via?
Sepulchrum Christi viventis
Et gloriam vidi resurgentis.
Angelicos testes,
Sudarium et vestes.

Tell us, O Mary! what sawest thou on the way?
I saw the Sepulchre of the living Christ, and the glory of Him that had risen. I saw the angels that were witnesses, the winding-sheets and the cloths.

Surrexit Christus spes mea,
Præcedet vos in Galilæam.
Scimus Christum surrexisse
A mortuis vere;
Tu nobis victor
Rex miserere. Amen Alleluia.

Christ my Hope has risen! He shall go before you into Galilee. We know that Christ hath truly risen from the dead. Do Thou, O Conqueror and King, have mercy upon us. Amen. Alleluia.

The gospel is from St. Mark (c. xvi.). It tells us how 'Mary Magdalen, and Mary the Mother of James, and Salome brought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus. . . . And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe . . . who saith to them: Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: He is risen, He is not here, behold the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee.' We know from the Gospel of St. John that the Magdalen, 'staying behind weeping because they had taken her Lord away and she knew not where they had laid Him,' was consoled by the presence of Jesus Himself, and how she knew Him not till He revealed Himself to her by one single word: 'Mary.' How full of consolation to us sinners are these words of the holy Gospel! 'The Lamb has redeemed the sheep; the innocent Jesus has reconciled sinners to His Father.' This is the feast of repentant sinners, for have not many on this day made their peace with God, after long wandering in the path of sin? And so the Magdalen, the notorious sinner in whose soul seven devils reigned, is chosen—inasmuch as she is repentant, and has loved much—to receive the first joyful message of Jesus, risen from the dead, and is bidden to take it to His Apostles.

Formerly Mass was followed by a solemn blessing of the Paschal Lamb, and of eggs. The custom still continues of eating lamb and decorating eggs with colours at Easter, but how few do these things in the pious spirit of their ancestors, or even remember that to them eggs were forbidden luxuries during the whole of Lent?

The Church commemorates in the gospel (Luke xxiv.) on Easter Monday the journey of the disciples to Emmaus; how our Lord, 'drawing near went with them,' and how 'they knew Him at the breaking of the bread.'

This gospel will give us much food for meditation. In

the first place, we are told that when we talk of our dear Lord, as the disciples are described as having done, we give Him the greatest consolation. Fr. Gallwey says: 'We must not forget how we can give great joy to our loving Lord by remembering Him, and still more by speaking of Him to others. Holy writers say that when we think of the sacred Passion, even in a way that seems to us not very devout, we greatly please our Lord and are sure to win good graces.'[1] Our dear Lord loves to be remembered; we have but to look at Him with eyes of faith and contrition, and He is ready with His reward. His reproach, through His prophets, has ever been: 'My people have forgotten me days without number' (Jer. ii.). Again, how useful is this lesson, that our Lord gives us, of the folly of all knowledge of spiritual things and doctrines, even if based on the Sacred Scripture itself, unless interpreted to us by our Lord Himself, or His Church —His other self—'totus Christus.' The disciples had the Scriptures; they knew the prophecies concerning our Lord; nay, more, they had seen their fulfilment with their own eyes; and yet, till our Lord 'expounded to them the Scriptures,' they understood nothing of the mysteries that passed before them.

Finally, let us, like the disciples, 'constrain Him to stay with us.' He desires to be pressed; as He has told us, He thirsts to be thirsted for: *sitit sitiri.* Especially does He desire that we should have a holy hunger and thirst to receive Him in the Sacrament of His love; there He will reveal Himself to us, as He ever does to His faithful children, 'in the breaking of the Bread.'

On Wednesday in Easter week the blessing of the *Agnus Dei* takes place in Rome. This ceremony takes place in the first and every succeeding seventh year of the Pope's pontificate. It is one of the oldest customs of the Church; traces may be found of it in the liturgies of the seventh century.

[1] *Watches of the Passion*, p. 387.

These objects are blessed against all sorts of dangers to soul and body, and are devoutly cherished by the faithful.

The first Sunday after Easter is called Low Sunday, or otherwise, Quasimodo Sunday, from the first word in the Introit, in which allusion is made to the neophytes who were so lately received into the Church.

Introit

Quasi modo geniti infantes, Alleluia, Alleluia: rationabile sine dolo lac concupiscite. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.	As new-born babes, Alleluia, Alleluia: desire the rational milk without guile. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.
Ps. Exultate Deo adjutori nostro: jubilate Deo Jacob.	*Ps.* Rejoice to God, our helper: sing aloud to the God of Jacob.

We read in the epistle (1 John v.) for this Sunday: 'Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' What a lesson is contained in these words! We have been contemplating the Passion and death of our Saviour. We have seen Him die on the Cross. In the eyes of all, even of His own beloved disciples, His life is a failure—the world has triumphed. And, behold, how short-lived is its triumph! He who was dead is risen from the grave, immortal and impassible. And thus it will be with us. Our faith is the victory which overcometh the world. In this world we may have distress: our Lord has warned us to expect it; but it will be only a passing trial; our victory is assured.

We read in the Gospel of St. John (ch. xx.) how our Lord appeared to the Apostles, 'the doors being shut, and stood in the midst of them,' and how He rebuked St. Thomas's incredulity by bidding him 'Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my

side; and be not faithless but believing.' Many, like St. Thomas, decline to believe unless they touch and see and feel, but our Lord says: 'Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed.' That blessing is for us; let us do our best to deserve it. At the same time the Church teaches that great good has resulted from the Apostle's incredulity, and his subsequent noble confession of faith. Had he and the rest of the Apostles accepted our Lord's Resurrection without demur, there would have been more room for scepticism in succeeding ages. As St. Gregory says: 'We are more helped to faith by St. Thomas's incredulity than by Magdalen's prompt belief.'

The Second Sunday after Easter is known as the Good Shepherd Sunday, as both in the epistle and in the gospel allusion is made to our Lord under the title of the Good Shepherd. As we read those touching words, 'I am the good shepherd; and I know Mine, and Mine know Me. As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for My sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd,' let us join our voice very earnestly to that of the holy angels and saints in intercession for those 'other sheep' of whom our Lord speaks, who are outside the unity of the Church. Our Divine Saviour most earnestly desires that we should pray and intercede for them. There are many, perhaps, whom we know, and who are bound to us by the tenderest ties, who are His sheep—as all are who are properly baptized, and have not culpably and knowingly renounced the Catholic Church, the Church of their baptism; His hour perhaps is not yet come for them, but He has put it in our power, by our fervent intercession, our practices of penance, our alms-deeds to hasten it, and thus to earn their everlasting gratitude, and our loving Saviour's plentiful rewards. For if we cannot give a glass of cold water to a disciple without deserving

a reward, what shall we not deserve who, by our prayers or our example, have given to them to drink of the 'living water' of Faith, which will become in them 'a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting?'

The Third Sunday after Easter is dedicated to the feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph. Dom Guéranger calls this feast 'a solemn expression of gratitude to St. Joseph, the Protector of the Faithful, the refuge and support of all that invoke him with confidence.' St. Teresa, the great saint and mystic of the sixteenth century, did much to foster and encourage this devotion to the holy spouse of the Blessed Virgin. It began in the convents and monasteries of Mount Carmel, and finally spread all over the Church. Speaking of the efficacy of prayer to St. Joseph, St. Teresa says: 'I cannot call to mind that I have ever asked him at any time for anything which he has not granted, and I am filled with amazement when I consider the great favours which God has given me through this blessed saint; the dangers from which he has delivered me, both of body and soul. To other saints our Lord seems to have given grace to succour men in some special necessity: but to this glorious saint, I know by experience, to help us in all. And our Lord would have us understand that as He was Himself subject to him on earth—for St. Joseph, having the title of father and being His guardian, could command Him—so now in heaven He performs all his petitions.'

The time is now approaching for our Lord to take leave of His disciples. Accordingly, on the Fourth and Fifth Sundays after Easter the Church selects, for the gospels to be read during Mass, portions from the sermon of our Lord after the Last Supper, in which He prepares them for His own departure and the coming of the Holy Ghost. Let us meditate on those words: 'It is expedient that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you.' And again (in

the gospel of the Fifth Sunday): 'Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask, and you shall receive: that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but I will show you plainly of the Father.'

The Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the sixth week after Easter are called the Rogation days.[1] The Rogation days were first heard of in the second half of the fifth century. They were inaugurated by St. Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne, who, on account of various public calamities, decreed that during three days there should be prayers, public processions, and that the faithful should be enjoined to fast, in order to avert the anger of God from His people. In 511 and 567, at the Councils of Orleans and Tours, the same pious custom was enforced. We find mention of it also in Italy, and Germany, and England at a very early date. And the objects of these prayers and processions seem in all cases to have been the same: namely, to avert God's chastisements which men deserve on account of their sins, and to draw down a heavenly blessing on the fruits of the earth. The Litany of the Saints is said before Mass, for these intentions.

Ascension Day

The stational church for this feast was formerly St. Peter's, but it is now kept in the Lateran Basilica.

The Introit of Mass is as follows:

Ye men of Galilee, why look ye wondering up to heaven? Alleluia. As ye have seen Him ascending into heaven, so shall He come. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Ps. Clap your hands, all ye nations: shout unto God with joy.

In the epistle, which is taken from the Acts of the Apostles, we read how our Lord ascended into heaven, in

[1] From *rogare*, to pray.

the presence of His Blessed Mother, His Apostles and disciples. This is a day of joy, as the Church testifies by her glad hymns and Alleluias, but it is impossible to repress a feeling of sadness as we read the sacred narrative and remember that our Lord is taken from us. He is no longer with His 'little flock,' as He has been the last forty days, walking with them, instructing them in sacred doctrine, even sharing their daily life, eating and conversing with them as heretofore; no wonder they stand looking up to heaven, as St. Peter tells us, gazing and lamenting as He is taken out of their sight. He is gone, their Jesus, their Lord and Master, but His words return to them which He had said so lately, 'I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.' So they, 'adoring, went back with great joy' to Jerusalem. And these loving and consoling words were addressed to us also, His children, for do we not belong equally to Him? Has He not said to all of us, even as to His disciples: 'Father! I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me, that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me?'

After the gospel (which is from that of St. Mark, ch. xvi.), the Paschal candle, the symbol of the presence of Jesus on earth, which was lit on the morning of the Resurrection, is extinguished.

The ten days which elapse between the Ascension of our Lord into heaven and Pentecost Sunday are days of special interest to the Christian soul. In them is commemorated how the Apostles, the disciples, the ever-blessed Mother of God, and the other devout women were gathered together 'in an upper chamber in Jerusalem'; and how 'all these were persevering with one mind in prayer,' waiting for the coming of the Paraclete. The infant Church gives us an example which we could not fail to profit greatly by imitating. To receive the great gift which God has in store for us—nay, more, which He is earnestly longing to give us—

we must pray, we must withdraw at least in spirit from the world, and in the upper chamber of our hearts we must lovingly and patiently await His coming. There is also another lesson we should learn from the holy gathering in the Cenacle, and that is that prayer, besides being persevering, should be joined, as the Scripture says, in unity with the Church and the Blessed Mother of God. Every time we assist at the Sacrifice of the Mass and join our feeble prayer with Jesus, the High-Priest and Victim, with the Angels who are gathered round Him, and with the whole Church triumphant in heaven and militant on earth which is commemorated there, we are praying, as did the Apostles, 'with one mind,' and we are by so doing giving the greatest honour and glory to God of which we are capable, and meriting to the utmost the graces He has in store for us.

The Introit for the Sunday within the Octave of Ascension Day expresses the longings of the Church to look once more on the face of her Spouse who has left her.

Hear, O Lord, my voice with which I have cried out to Thee, Alleluia. My heart hath said to Thee: I have sought Thy face! I will seek Thy face, O Lord: turn not Thy face from me. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Ps. The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? Glory, etc.

In the epistle, which is taken from the First Epistle of St. Peter (ch. iv.), the keynote is struck of the Church's aspirations for the faithful. 'Dearly beloved: Be prudent, and watch in prayers. But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves.' Prayers, charity, a holy union of minds and hearts, this is what the Church would desire to see in her children as a preparation for the great feast which is at hand; and to these devotional practices she adds another during this week—namely, fasting.

'Prayer is good with fasting and alms,' as the Scripture tells us, 'more than to lay up treasures of gold.'[1]

Whit Sunday

This feast, which in the sacred liturgy ranks as equal in dignity and importance with that of Easter, is looked upon by the Fathers as the birthday of the Christian Church. Till now they were a little flock, a scattered remnant, weak, and divided even into factions among themselves, of no account in the world; but from the moment the Holy Ghost descends upon them a complete transformation takes place. The words of our Lord are fulfilled, 'It is expedient to you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go I will send Him to you.' Two great truths are revealed to us by these words, one which concerns the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, and the other which concerns us all, as living members of the Church of Christ.

The first concerns the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, as we learn by it that, as the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, it was a part of the eternal decree that the Son should have taken His place in glory at the right hand of the Father before the Spirit was sent on the *exterior* mission to man, which is 'the sequel and manifestation of the mysterious and eternal production which is ever going on *within* the Divinity.'[2] It was to this Divine truth that St. John alludes in his Gospel, when he says: 'For as yet the Spirit was not given, as Jesus was not glorified' (John vii. 39). It was necessary, therefore, that the disciples should be deprived of the visible presence of their Divine Lord and Master, so that He who came to them as a consuming Fire should destroy in them all earthly weaknesses and attachments, and thus not only 'teach them all truth,'

[1] Tobias, xii. 8.

[2] *Paschal Time*, iii. 292.

but 'bring all things to their minds' whatsoever Jesus had told them. And this latter great and all-embracing truth is what concerns every Christian man and woman born into the world. For as—the Fathers teach us—the people of Israel, living under the Old Law, were under the immediate protection and jurisdiction of God the Father, and the disciples and followers of our Lord were during His life on earth under the dispensation of Christ, so do we, who are 'heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ,' live under the personal mission and guidance of the Holy Ghost. We all need the Holy Ghost. For He it is Who, when He reigns in a soul by sanctifying grace, infuses into it those gifts or powers which above all other things are necessary for its salvation. The prophet Isaias, inspired by the same Divine Spirit, tells us what they are, when speaking of the Flower which buds on the Root of Jesse. He says: 'And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him —the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and he shall be filled with the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.' The Fathers of the Church also teach us that, as the Pasch of the Jews received its fulfilment in the sacrifice of the Cross, so the Pentecost of the Old Law—the day when Moses received on Mount Sinai in thunder and gloom the tablets of the Law fifty days after the deliverance of the people of Israel from the perils of the Red Sea—prefigured the second Pentecost, in which the Spirit of love descended into the hearts of His children. In the days of the first Pentecost the law of fear reigned; man had sinned, the Messiah was not yet come. In the second all is changed. 'The innocent Jesus has reconciled sinners to His Father.' Accordingly the Spirit of love comes as a 'sound from heaven as of a mighty wind.' He is vehement, He is resistless, for who can resist Him and live? He takes the form of 'parted tongues, as it were of fire,' and at once

they are 'filled with the Holy Ghost, and they begin to speak with divers tongues according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.'

When the sins of the world were multiplied and God was weary of the iniquities of men, He cast confusion on them at the Tower of Babel by causing them to talk many different tongues, so that no one could understand the other. But now all is changed. The Gospel is to be preached over the whole world, and in the spirit of love, ardent and all-embracing, the Paraclete descends on to the infant Church, enduing it with the gift of tongues, so that 'all were amazed and wondered because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue . . . the wonderful works of God.'

The miracle of Pentecost terminated with the lives of the Apostles, but the Holy Ghost still reigns in the Church which was inaugurated on that day. Still, as St. Augustine says, 'the whole body of Christ, the Church, speaks in all tongues. Nay, I myself speak all tongues, for I am in the body of Christ. Greek is mine, Syriac is mine, Hebrew is mine, and all are mine, for I am one with all the several nations that speak them.' [1]

Spiritual writers, commenting on this great feast, draw particular attention to Mary's share in it. She is the spouse of the Holy Ghost, and this is His second Coming upon her. This second Coming is one that is full of mystery, and has a very deep meaning with regard to the formation of the Church of Christ. Mary is the Mother of Jesus, and He is one with His Church. Jesus has ascended to heaven, but more loving, more tender, if it were possible, to the children whom He leaves behind, even than to the Mother who bore Him, He leaves her yet awhile to be the blessed Mother, the Instructress of the infant Church. He leaves her, in order that He may multiply indefinitely her reward in heaven, when her time shall come, but not, we are told, without

[1] *Enarr. in Ps. cxlvii.* verse 14.

asking her consent and receiving again the word of Mary as when she consented to the mystery of the Incarnation: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord.' It is by this fresh infusion of the grace of the Holy Ghost that she is fitted to become (as the Church ever styles her) the second Eve, 'the true Mother of the living,' and thus are the words of Scripture verified: 'The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful; the Most High hath sanctified His Tabernacle' (Ps. xlv. 5).

It was at the hour of Tierce, 'the third hour of the day,' when the mystery of Pentecost was accomplished; Tierce is therefore celebrated on this day with special solemnity, and begins with the beautiful hymn *Veni Creator*, the first stanza of which is sung kneeling. The station for this day is St. Peter's.

The Introit is as follows:

The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world, Alleluia. And that which contained all things hath knowledge of the voice. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Ps. Let God arise, and His enemies be dispersed; and let them that hate Him fly before His face. Glory, etc.

The epistle is from the Acts of the Apostles (chap. ii.), in which St. Luke, an eye-witness, relates the history of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles. The gospel is from our Divine Saviour's sermon at the Last Supper. After telling His disciples Who it was that He was about to send to them, He says: 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world giveth do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you: I go away, and I come again to you. If you loved me you would indeed be glad because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe.'

Peace, therefore, is one of the special gifts, or blessings, which man is to derive from the coming of the Holy Ghost; but our Lord adds: 'Not as the world giveth do I give unto you.' The world also claims the power of giving peace; or, rather, it represents to man that by the means it places in his hands, pleasures, money, power, he will have reached that summit of his desires on which it is assumed he will find peace. But has any one of these things, or have all combined, the power of conferring peace on the soul of man? First of all there is the acquisition of them; and there we are reminded of the words of the Book of Wisdom, 'They wearied themselves in the way of iniquity and destruction;' and when, with infinite labour, with anxious vigils and incessant fatigues, man is in possession of the object of his ambition, who can guarantee to him its possession for a single hour? Death may come at any moment, the moth may consume, the thief break in and steal.

What, then, is the peace our Lord promises to His followers? It is, in the first place, the peace of a good conscience: that joy and serenity of mind that come from the knowledge that God is our Father, the Church our Mother, that perfect confidence with which we expect the fulfilment of His promises to men of good-will. For we know that 'the fear of the Lord is honour, and glory, and gladness, and a crown of joy. The fear of the Lord shall delight the heart, and shall give joy and gladness and length of days.' Finally, it lies in the satisfaction of that inborn instinct of man which will not suffer his heart to rest in anything less than God. He was made for God and for eternity; nothing less will ever satisfy him. As St. Teresa says: 'He that possesses God wants for nothing. God is all-sufficient.'

The Time after Pentecost

The period between Whitsunday and Advent is called in the sacred liturgy the Time after Pentecost. Its duration varies between twenty-three and twenty-seven weeks, and is determined by the date of Easter.

Like all the rest of this holy cycle, it has a very special meaning and application both for the spiritual wants of Holy Church, as well as for those of every member of it. The faithful who under the guidance of this same holy Mother have been following attentively in the footsteps of the Son of God, have sought to learn at His cradle, in His public life, His fasts, His cruel persecution, His sufferings, His death, and finally His glorious Resurrection and His triumphant Ascension into heaven, all the profound truths which He wished to instil into them by means of the example of His life on earth ; and they are now prepared for the reception of the Divine message which is to complete their spiritual life.

They are to learn from the teaching of the Holy Ghost, from His interior presence in their souls, guided by the outward leading of the Church, those hidden secrets of which our Divine Lord spoke when He said, 'I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them yet; but when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth. For He shall not speak of Himself, but what things soever He shall hear He shall speak, and the things that are to come He shall show you.' (John ch. xvi. 12, 13.) The paths the Christian has followed hitherto, by the Purgative, to the Illuminative Way have at last led up to and culminated in the Unitive Way. 'The production of this life,' Dom Guéranger tells us, 'is the special work of the Holy Ghost, who has been sent into this world that He may maintain each one of our souls in the possession of Christ and may bring to perfection the love whereby the creature is united with its God.'

'In this state, in this Unitive life, the soul is made to relish and assimilate into herself all that substantial and nourishing food which is presented to her so abundantly during the Time after Pentecost. The mysteries of the Trinity and of the Blessed Sacrament, the mercy and the power of the Heart of Jesus, the glories of Mary and her influence upon the Church and upon souls—all these are manifested to the soul with more clearness than ever, and produce in her effects not previously experienced. In the feasts of the saints, so great and so varied during this portion of the year, she feels more and more intimately the bond which unites her to them in Christ, through the Holy Spirit. The eternal happiness of heaven, which is to follow the trials of this mortal life, is revealed to her by the feast of All Saints; she gains clearer notions of that mysterious bliss, which consists in light and love. . . . Thus enlightened by the incorporation into herself of the mysteries wherewith the sacred liturgy has nourished her, as also by the gifts poured into her by the Holy Ghost, the soul yields itself up, and without any effort, to the impulse of the Divine Mover. Virtue has become all the more easy to her, as she aspires, it would almost seem naturally, to what is most perfect; sacrifices, which used formerly to terrify, now delight her; she makes use of this world as though she used it not, for all true realities, as far as she is concerned, exist beyond this world.'[1] In this state she realises the word of the Apostle and is become 'one spirit with the Lord.'

This progress of the soul from height to height is exemplified in the sacred liturgy by the order in which the Holy Books are read in the Divine Office and at Mass. From Pentecost to the beginning of August the four books of Kings, in which the vicissitudes of the history of the Church are foretold, are given. In August we have set before us what are called the Sapiential books, or books of Wisdom.

[1] *Time after Pentecost*, i. 10.

These are followed in September by those of Tobias, Judith, Esther, and Job, or the Hagiographic books, which show us the fruit of wisdom, which is holiness of life, or 'Wisdom in action.' As our Lord warns us to expect great tribulation in the last days of the world, the Church gives us the glorious records of those holy martyrs the Maccabees to encourage us, in the month of October; and in November the prophecies of Ezechiel, and Daniel, and the Minor Prophets, to remind us of the great and final judgment when the Lord shall come in glory and judge all the nations of the earth.

The colour of the vestments worn on the Sundays after Pentecost is green, to denote the hope and reliance placed by the Church in the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit, who Jesus, her Divine Spouse, has promised shall be with all her days, even to the consummation of the world.

Trinity Sunday

The first mention we find made of this feast is in the eighth century, when the holy monk Alcuin composed a Mass in honour of the Blessed Trinity. In 920, Stephen, Bishop of Liège, solemnly inaugurated the same feast in his diocese, and composed an entire office in honour of the mystery. By degrees the feast spread and took root in many different countries: in England (where it was established by St. Thomas of Canterbury), in Germany, and in France. Finally, in 1334, John XXII., who then occupied the Papal Chair, decreed that the feast should be kept on the Sunday after Pentecost throughout the Church. That a day should be specially set apart for the worship of this adorable mystery on which the Christian world is founded is only natural. God, as He tells us by the mouth of the Apostle, 'dwells for ever in inaccessible light,' so the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity is one which we adore, and believe, without understanding. To the Jews, under the Old Law, the very doctrine

was unknown, or known only very imperfectly. They had but glimpses of the divine truths which God reserved for those born in the full light of the Gospel. 'For the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ' (St. John i. 17). 'God so loved the world that He gave it His only begotten Son' to be the life of the world. This is the message of the Gospel, by which, if we accept it, we are saved. And again as the Son, 'the Word who was from the beginning, and who was with God,' sent us 'the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father' and the Son, we recognize in the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity 'the brightness of eternal light' (Wisd. vii. 26) and 'the figure of His substance' (Heb. i. 1, 3). For as St. Augustine says: 'They are not more than One: One that loveth Him who is from Him: and One that loveth Him from whom He is; and One who is that very Love.' [1]

The Athanasian Creed is recited at the office of Prime. The epistle is taken from the eleventh chapter of St. Paul to the Romans:

> O the depths of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him? For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things. To Him be glory for ever. Amen.

The gospel is from that of St. Matthew (ch. xxvii.). The Divine Office for the day is distinguished by the simplicity of its hymns and antiphons. The words that most constantly recur are: *O Beata Trinitas*; as if the mind of man were confounded and abashed before the great mystery put before it, and, like the Cherubim who cover their faces and their feet before the Presence, could only adore and be silent.

[1] St. Augustine, *De Trin.* lib. vi. cap. 7; *Time after Pentecost*, i. 147.

The feast of Corpus Christi, which is held on Thursday after Trinity Sunday, was instituted in the thirteenth century. At that time the faith of the world was beginning to grow cold, and the fervour and frequent Communions of the early Christians had given place to coldness and indifference. The Church was forced to coerce her children into approaching the Holy Table under pain of exclusion from her fold, when Blessed Juliana of Liège, a holy Religious of the Order of Hospitallers, was inspired to plead that a special day should be given up to the love and worship of the great mystery.

It was in the year 1208 that Blessed Juliana received the divine intimation in a mysterious vision; but many years elapsed before the humble and timid Nun saw the fulfilment of her desire. Finally, it required the miracle of the bleeding Host at Bolsena, witnessed by Urban IV., to accelerate its promulgation ; and this prodigy and the pious urgency of many devout souls caused that Pontiff to issue a Bull instituting the feast on the Thursday after the Octave of Pentecost about the year 1262. This Bull, however, owing to the unsettled state of the Church in Italy at the time, did not come into actual operation till 1318.

St. Thomas Aquinas composed the office of the feast; the lessons which are read each day of the octave are from St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Ambrose.

All the faith and worship of the Catholic Church converge on the Holy Eucharist, since the great truth that Christ died for us, and gave Himself under the form of bread and wine to be our food and sustenance, is at the root of all the love and hope and belief of her children. It is fitting, therefore, that this great feast should be kept with outward signs of pomp and magnificence proper for the service of His Divine Majesty the King of kings; and still more inwardly by that preparation which is so acceptable to Him—of loving and contrite hearts. By its position in the

calendar, ten days after the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, the Church conveys another lesson to us by means of this feast: and that is that this gift of God comes to us by means of the Divine Spirit. 'It was by Him who is eternal fire, that is by the Spirit,' says the Abbot Rupert, 'that Mary conceived; it was by Him that Jesus offered Himself, a living victim to the living God; and it is by the same fire that He now burns on our altars, for it is by the operation of the Holy Ghost that the bread is changed into His Body.'[1] This thought, that the same flesh which Jesus took in the womb of Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost is put before us in this divine Banquet, is continually in the mind of Holy Church, and recurs repeatedly in her offices.

The antiphons of the first Vespers of the feast begin by hailing our Lord under His title of High Priest:[2]

Christ the Lord, being made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech, hath offered bread and wine. Alleluia.

He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat unto them that fear Him. Alleluia.

I will take the cup of salvation, and offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Alleluia.

In the Responsories we see the doctrine of the Eucharist illustrated by the types of the Old Law.

The whole assembly of the Children of Israel shall kill the lamb towards the evening of the Passover, and they shall eat the flesh and unleavened bread. Alleluia.

Ye shall eat flesh, and shall be filled with bread. This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. Alleluia.

Moses gave you not that Bread from Heaven, but My Father giveth you the true Bread from Heaven. Alleluia.

Elijah looked, and behold, there was a cake baken on the coals

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[1] *Ibid.* p. 374.

[2] The English rendering of the Divine Office is taken from Lord Bute's Breviary.

at his head; and he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto the Mount of God. Alleluia.

The psalms of Matins and Lauds are taken from those of the royal prophet in which he prophesied the greatness of the 'perfect tabernacle' which was to come and rejoiced in the prospect before him; and the Church again and again repeats those words: 'He hath made a remembrance [or memorial] of His wonderful works; He hath given food to them that fear Him.' The epistle of the Mass of Corpus Christi is taken from the First of St. Paul to the Corinthians, and the gospel from the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel.

In both these passages of Scripture the Church puts before us the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. Let us meditate deeply on it, and while we tremble lest we should (according to St. Paul's words) by a sacrilegious Communion eat and drink judgment on ourselves, let us also remember that we come by His invitation, in order that He may abide in us and we in Him. So, having 'proved ourselves'—that is, made a contrite and humble confession of our sins—let us approach with great confidence to this wonderful Sacrament, the Bread of Angels, having in it all that is delicious and 'able to content every man's delight.'

Hymn of St. Thomas to the Blessed Sacrament

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas, Quæ sub his figuris vere latitas; Tibi se cor meum totum subjicit, Quia te contemplans totum deficit.	I devoutly adore Thee, O hidden Godhead, who art truly present concealed under these forms. My heart is wholly lost and prostrate in humble adoration in the contemplation of Thee.
Visus, tactus, gustus in te fallitur,	Neither sight, nor touch, nor taste avails us in Thy presence.

Sed auditu solo tuto creditur.
Credo quidquid dixit Dei Filius,
Nil hoc verbo veritatis verius.

Our hearing alone is the safe foundation of our belief. I believe whatever the Son of God has spoken. Nothing can be truer than the word of Truth Itself.

In cruce latebat sola Deitas,
At hic latet simul et humanitas:
Ambo tamen credens atque confitens,
Peto quod petivit latro pœnitens.

On the Cross, the Divinity alone was concealed, but here humanity too lies hidden. I believe and confess that both are here present, and I pray for what the penitent thief prayed to obtain.

Plagas, sicut Thomas, non intueor,
Deum tamen meum te confiteor.
Fac me tibi semper magis credere,
In te spem habere, te diligere.

Unlike Thomas, I see not the wounds, yet do I confess Thee to be my God. O may I ever more believe in Thee, hope in Thee, and love Thee.

O memoriale mortis Domini,
Panis vivus vitam præstans homini:
Præsta meæ menti de te vivere,
Et te illi semper dulce sapere.

O Blessed Memorial of the death of my Lord! O living Bread that givest life to man! May my soul ever live by Thee, and ever delight in Thy sweetness.

Pie Pelicane, Jesu Domine,
Me immundum munda tuo sanguine,
Cujus una stilla salvum facere
Totum mundum quit ab omni scelere.

O loving Pelican! Jesus my Lord, cleanse me, impure as I am, with Thy Blood, one drop of which is sufficient to cleanse the whole world.

Jesu, quem velatum nunc aspicio,
Oro fiat illud quod tam sitio:
Ut te revelata cernens facie
Visu sim beatus tuæ gloriæ.
Amen.

O Jesus, whom I now behold behind a veil, give me, I entreat of Thee, the grace I so earnestly desire; that seeing Thee with unveiled face I may be happy in the vision of Thy glory. Amen.

In countries where it is possible High Mass is followed by a procession of the Blessed Sacrament.

The lesson in the Divine Office for the Saturday within the Octave of Corpus Christi is taken from St. John Chrysostom: 'Dearly beloved brethren, it behoveth us to learn the miracle of the Mysteries—what the Gift is, and why It was given, and what is the use thereof. "We, being many, are one body," saith the Apostle Paul; and again, "We are members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones." Only the initiated will now understand what I say. That this union may take place, not by love only, but verily and indeed, we ought to mingle our own with His Flesh. And this is done by eating that Food which He hath given unto us, being fain to manifest that exceeding great love which He beareth to us-ward. To this end He hath mingled Himself with us, and infused His Body into our bodies, that we may be one together. . . . Such union do they long for that love much.'

In the office and Mass of the Second Sunday after Pentecost, Holy Church again puts before us the thought of the loving care of God for His chosen people.

In the Introit we read:

Factus est Dominus protector meus, et eduxit me in latitudinem: salvum me fecit, quoniam voluit me.	The Lord hath become my protector, and set me at large: He hath saved me, because He loved me.

The epistle is taken from St. John (1 John iii.): 'Dearly beloved, wonder not if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren.' We must be prepared, then, to accept the world's hatred; but are we to return hatred with hatred, scorn with scorn? No! Ten thousand times no! The lesson Jesus gives us in this great gift of the Eucharist is love, and ever love: for those of the household of the faith

in the first place, but also for all for whom He shed His most precious Blood.

In the gospel, which is taken from that of St. Luke (ch. xiv.), we read of the man who made a great supper. In this parable the Fathers have seen a type of the human race, who, first in the person of the Jews—the chosen people—and then of the Gentiles, were invited to the great Banquet of the 'Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world.' The Marriage Feast—the Incarnation of the Son of God and His mystical union with man—was ready; but the ungrateful Jews were not worthy. They made excuses, they refused to come, and so the Most High goes forth again and bids, nay, compels, the poor and the blind and the feeble, in other words the Gentiles, *us*, each one of us, to come and eat of His supper. Let us humbly reflect how often we too have imitated the ingratitude of the Jews; Jesus has invited us, but the world was too tempting, our affairs too engrossing. We could not find time to give to Him, however pressing His invitation. Let the lesson of this holy Octave be a fresh zeal in His service, and a greater desire to receive Him in Holy Communion.

The feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is kept on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi. The devotion to the Sacred Heart, as the emblem of Christ's love for man, has existed since the earliest ages. It was the special devotion of the great Benedictine Saints Gertrude and Mechtild in the thirteenth century, and later on it was the object of divine revelation to the humble Religious of Paray-le-Monial, Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque; and a decree granted in 1856 by Pius IX. at the entreaty of the Church of France elevated the feast which commemorates it to the dignity of one kept by the universal Church.

St. Augustine's words afford a simple explanation of the grounds on which this devotion is held. 'The Evangelist,' he says, 'made use of a word which has a special

import when he said "the soldier *opened* Jesus' side with a spear;" he did not say *struck* the side, or wounded the side, or anything similar, but he said he *opened* Jesus' side. He opened it, for that side was like the door of life, and when it was opened the Sacraments (the Mysteries) of the Church came through it.'[1] Again in the epistle and gospel of the Mass for this day we are called upon to rejoice, inasmuch as we have been bought at a great price. In the gospel (according to St. John) we commemorate the piercing of our Saviour's heart by a lance, and in the epistle we join with the prophet Isaias in praising and giving thanks to Him by whose stripes we are healed. 'Ye shall draw waters with joy,' he says, 'out of the Saviour's fountains; and ye shall say in that day: Praise ye the Lord, and call upon His name. . . . Rejoice and praise, O thou habitation of Sion: for great is He that is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel.'

The sentiment predominating in the introit and epistle and gospel of the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost is one which belongs in a special manner to this season of the ecclesiastical year. It is the spirit of the warrior buckling on his armour for the fight, of the Christian preparing for his encounter with the threefold enemy of his salvation, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea, quem timebo? Dominus defensor vitæ meæ, a quo trepidabo? Qui tribulant me inimici mei, ipsi infirmati sunt et ceciderunt.	The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? My enemies that trouble me have been weakened, and they have fallen.

The epistle is from St. Paul to the Romans (ch. viii.) and begins: 'Brethren, I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come,

[1] *Time after Pentecost*, i. 445.

that shall be revealed to us.' What a trumpet-note of confidence in God and of holy hope St. Paul utters in these words! 'In the world you shall have distress,' our Lord says; 'but take confidence, I have overcome the world.' This is the spirit in which we should face the troubles of life; the sufferings are short, but the reward eternal.

The gospel is from that of St. Luke (ch. v.), in which we read of the great capture of fish by Simon, when at our Lord's word he put down the net. The Evangelist tells how 'when they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes their net broke.' The Church also has her vicissitudes, but as Christ spoke and preached, and issued His commands from Peter's bark whilst on earth, so it will ever be to the end of time. The net may break—for a moment the spirits of darkness may triumph—but God's designs never can be frustrated, and 'the very great multitude' will be safely landed on the eternal shore.

The epistle and gospel for the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost have the teaching of brotherly love for their key-note. The epistle is from the third chapter of the First Epistle of St. Peter, and begins: 'Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble;' and ends with the beautiful words: 'sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts.'

The gospel is from that of St. Matthew (ch. v.), in which our Lord warns His disciples that unless their justice exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees they shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. He tells them that in the New Law hatred in the heart will be punished though it find no outlet in deeds: 'Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' Of what use is the love of God unless the love of our brother man reigns in our hearts? This is the very

essence of the teaching of Jesus Christ. This Sunday is ordinarily in proximity to the feast of the glorious Apostles, Saints Peter and Paul, and the antiphon on the previous Saturday (taken from 2 Kings i. 23) is as follows: 'Glorious Princes of the earth! as they loved each other in their life, so even in death they were not divided.' This antiphon is repeated daily through the octave.

Feast of Saints Peter and Paul

The Responsories in the Divine Office of this feast are full of allusions, taken from Scripture, to the faith of Peter. In one we read:

Arise, O Peter! Cast thy garment about thee, gird thee with strength for the saving of nations. The chains are fallen off from thy hands.

V. The angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly.

The chains are fallen off from thy hands.

And again in the seventh responsory:

Peter, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

V. Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

V. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

In the fifth lesson at Matins we read these magnificent words of St. Leo the Great:

These twain be thy fathers, these be in good sooth thy shepherds; these twain be they who laid for thee, as touching the kingdom of heaven, better and happier foundations than did they that first planned thine earthly ramparts, wherefrom he who gave thee thy name took occasion to pollute thee with a brother's blood. These are they who have set on thine head thy glorious crown, that thou art become an holy nation, a chosen people, a city both Priestly and Kingly, whom the sacred throne of Blessed Peter hath

exalted till thou art become the lady of the world, unto whom the world-wide love of God hath conceded a broader lordship than in the possession of any mere earthly empire. Thou wast once waxen great by victories, until thy power was spread haughtily over land and sea; but thy power was narrower then, which the toils of war had won for thee, than that thou now hast, which hath been laid at thy feet by the peace of Christ.

The epistle in the Mass for this feast is taken from the Acts of the Apostles (ch. xii.), and the gospel from that of St. Matthew (ch. xvi.), in which that Evangelist records the great act of faith which St. Peter made, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and the promise of our Lord to His Church: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound in heaven.'

The epistle of the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost is taken from that of St. Paul to the Romans (ch. vi.), in which he bids us, as we are baptized in Christ Jesus and so died with Him, 'as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life, that we may serve sin no longer.' It is not sufficient to belong to Christ in name, to be baptized into His Church. We must renounce sin, the body of death. We must walk worthy of the vocation to which we are called, becoming 'fruitful of all good work,' and thus by our union with our Divine Head, through sanctifying grace, merit an eternal reward. In the gospel, which is taken from the eighth chapter of St. Mark, we learn how our Lord, in compassion for the multitude who had followed Him into the wilderness, worked the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes.

The lesson for the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost is taken from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (ch. vi.). The union of the soul with Christ is the object to which all the teaching and aspirations of Holy Church are directed

in the Time after Pentecost. The obstacle to this union is sin; so again in this lesson, as on the last Sunday, she puts before us the warning of the Apostle 'that as ye have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, unto iniquity, so now yield your members to serve justice unto sanctification.' He who dwelleth among the lilies will never take up His abode in an impure heart, and we must throw off the slavery of sin before we can enjoy the freedom with which Christ has made us free.

In the gospel, which is taken from that of St. Matthew (ch. vii.), Jesus Christ explains how we are to recognize His disciples. 'By their fruits,' He says, 'you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil bringeth forth evil fruit.' How practical is the lesson which we may apply to ourselves from this text! Are we, like good trees, bearing fruit in charity to our neighbours, in kind deeds and good example, or is our fruit (as the epistle tells us) 'in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?'

The epistle for the Eighth Sunday after Pentecost is taken again from St. Paul to the Romans (ch. viii.), and here we are led on, from the consideration of our past life under the bondage of sin, to the longing desire to free ourselves under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. 'For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God; and if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ.'

The gospel read on this Sunday is that of the unjust steward from St. Luke (ch. xvi.). What a deep meaning, and likewise warning, we should see in those words of the rich man: 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for now thou canst be steward no longer!' They are words which will sound in our ears, each one of us, when we come before the judgment-seat of Christ, when we shall have to render an account, as He tells us, before Him and His angels, of our

time, our opportunities, our influence, yea, even of every idle word and disorderly affection. Let us, then, make friends of the mammon of iniquity by using our riches and our talents in the service of God, 'so that we may be received into everlasting dwellings.'

In the epistle of the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost St. Paul, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, dwells on the terrible and repeated falls of the Israelites, and implores his children in Christ to avoid the temptations by which they fell. He warns them that humility and confidence in God, who 'is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above which you are able,' are necessary for all. God puts all the means of salvation in our hands, but He will not save us *in spite of ourselves*. We must co-operate with Him by great trust in Him and great humility and distrust of ourselves.

The gospel is from the nineteenth chapter of St. John, and relates how our Divine Saviour wept over Jerusalem, lamenting that she knew not the things that were to her peace. How often have we not—the chosen people of God who were prefigured by the fated city—wounded the loving Heart of Jesus! How frequently He has visited us by His divine inspirations, but we have not known the time of our visitation! Let us tremble lest the day come when we shall be 'straitened on all sides,' and, instead of meeting Him as a Saviour, shall come before Him as the just Judge of heaven and earth.

The epistle of the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost is from the First of St. Paul to the Corinthians (ch. xii.), and dwells on the marvellous unity of the Catholic Church. There alone we see 'the diversities of grace, but one Spirit;' 'diversities of ministries, but the same Lord;' and 'diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all.' Let us thank God for the grace of having been led into the Church, or having been born in it, and endeavour to cultivate

a holy horror of dissensions which rend the fair robe of Christ, which is His Church. The gospel for this Sunday is from that of St. Luke (ch. xviii.), in which he relates the parable of the two men who went up into the temple to pray, the one being a Pharisee and the other a publican. Humility is the foundation of all virtues; without it we build our spiritual life on sand or dust. So if we rejoice in our glorious prerogative of being children of God's Church and members of His Body, let us do so, as the Apostle bids us, with trembling, remembering that 'we carry our treasure' —our Faith—'in earthen vessels,' and may at any moment, without the help of God, disgrace our holy profession.

In the epistle of the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (1 Cor. xv.) St. Paul again gives us a lesson on the great virtue of humility. After telling his disciples on what sure proofs the Gospel of Christ rested, he says: 'Last of all He was seen by me, as one born out of due time. For I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.' Humility, therefore, is equally necessary to all—to the great Apostle as to the humblest of his followers—for all owe every spiritual gift they possess to the merits of Christ and to the mercy of their Creator. The gospel is from the touching narrative of St. Mark (ch. vii.) of Jesus healing one born deaf and dumb. Do we not all require that loving and tender hand on our ears and lips? that voice saying: 'Ephpheta, be thou opened?' How deaf we are to His inspirations! Our tongues move, but not after His Divine law. Let us go to Him, remembering those words that were said of Him: 'He doth all things well.'

The lesson of the Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost begins with the consoling words of St. Paul (1 Cor. ch. iii.): 'Brethren, we have confidence through Christ towards God, not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.' If the

lessons conveyed in the previous Sundays showed us our dangers, our liability to temptations and falls, and urged us to a full confession and acknowledgment of our miseries, here another note is struck of encouragement and trust in God. Jesus, our great Captain, goes before us: let us follow Him. Our actions may be worthless of themselves, but united to His, one with Him—as branches of the heavenly Vine—we may confidently hope we shall bring forth fruit in due season, worthy of an eternal reward. The gospel is from the tenth chapter of St. Luke, in which he tells us the story of the good Samaritan. Jesus teaches us by means of this parable that empty professions are not sufficient; our love for our neighbour must find expression in deeds. We must, like the Samaritan, stop on our journey through life, going out of our way at personal inconvenience, and with the sacrifice of our worldly goods, to help him. Thus only shall we fulfil the first and greatest commandments, namely to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves.

Feast of the Assumption[1] of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The lessons and antiphons of the Divine Office for this feast are drawn principally from the Canticle of Canticles, and from Ecclesiasticus, in which the dignity of the Mother of the Son of God is foretold.

The lesson (Ecclus. xxiv. 11–20) at Mass alludes again

[1] Literally, God's taking the Blessed Virgin to Himself. By universal tradition, the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary was, after death, re-united to her soul in heaven. St. John Damascene gives the history of the Assumption in detail. This tradition has been the common sentiment of the faithful. 'Admirable,' says Petavius, 'is the admonition of Paulinus of Nola, an author of the greatest weight, who bids us adhere to the common voice of the faithful, since the Spirit of God breathes upon all.'—See *Catholic Dictionary*, p. 45.

to the resting-place the Creator found in the bosom of His creature. 'In all things I sought rest, and I shall abide in the inheritance of the Lord. Then the Creator of all things commanded, and said to me; and He that made me rested in my tabernacle.'

Let us meditate on this marvellous privilege of Mary's, while we (in the words of Holy Church) rejoice with the angels, and give praise to the Son of God. The gospel, which is from that of St. Luke (ch. x.), bids us contemplate the hidden character of Mary's life. Like her namesake, Mary the sister of Martha, she sat at the Lord's feet, hearing His word. To be Mother of the Incarnate Word is the privilege of one only—of her who was called 'blessed among women'—but we may all take lessons from her life, hidden with Christ in God, and profit by her example.

The epistle of the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Gal. ch. iii.) treats of the promises made to Abraham, and fulfilled to those who believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The gospel, from St. Luke (ch. xvii.), gives us a passage from our Lord's life upon earth. Ten lepers come to Him entreating to be cured, but when (the compassionate Heart of Jesus pitying their miserable condition) He sends them to the priests, and going 'they were made clean,' but one comes back to return thanks, for once a reproach comes from those long-suffering lips. 'Were not ten made clean?' He asks; 'and where are the nine?' How often we may ask ourselves, has not our ingratitude deserved this reproach! How many hours do we not spend in petition in comparison to the few short, grudging moments given, when our prayer is granted, to praise and thanksgiving! And yet it is for this we were created, and to have 'remembered His justifications in the days of our pilgrimage' will be a source of joy to us for all eternity.

In the Introit of the Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Holy Church puts before us the outcome or summing up of the teaching conveyed in the epistle and gospel:

Behold, O God our protector, and look on the face of Thy Christ, for better is one day in Thy courts above thousands.

Ps. How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.

It is the pure heart, the heart detached from earthly wants and cares, which alone enjoys this blessed peace, which alone aspires after the heavenly courts, and already in this world enjoys a peace passing all understanding. Let us therefore resolve to 'walk in the Spirit,' as St. Paul bids us do in the epistle of this Sunday (Gal. v. 22). 'For the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law.'

In the gospel of this Sunday (Matt. ch. vi.) the same lesson is insisted on. We 'cannot serve God and mammon.' We must give our service—our hearts—entirely to God, and in return He will have care of us.

The special lesson of the epistle of the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Gal. ch. v. and vi.) is one of love, and especially brotherly love; and we must learn it of the Holy Ghost, Who is the Spirit of love, for 'if we live in the Spirit let us walk in the Spirit . . . Bear ye one another's burthens, and so ye shall fulfil the law of Christ . . . And in doing good let us not fail. For in due time we shall reap, not failing. Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men.'

In the gospel (Luke ch. vii.) Jesus gives us examples of His loving compassion with the sorrows of mankind by raising up the son of the widow of Naim and giving him back to her arms. The Fathers have seen in this history a type of Jesus and the Church. She mourns incessantly the death of so many of her children by sin, and never ceases entreating the Son of God to give them back to her. 'Who shall tell the

joy of her heart when she receives back, living, the children she mourned over as dead? If the conversion of sinners is such a joy to the angels, what must it be to such a Mother! According to the multitude of the sorrows of her heart so will be the consolations, giving joy to her soul.'[1]

The words of the epistle of the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Eph. ch. iii.) might give us food for meditation for the rest of our lives; for will they not form the matter of our contemplation for our eternity? Let us first understand how we are to master them. We must, as St. Paul says, begin by asking Him to grant us, 'according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened by His Spirit with might unto the inward man; that Christ may dwell by faith in (our) hearts' . . . so that we 'may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth.' O wonderful mystery of the love of God for man! God alone—in our hearts—can teach us what it is to be loved by Him, Who Himself will be our exceeding great reward. From the gospel of this Sunday (Luke ch. xiv.) we learn that there is no virtue more necessary than humility. By the parable of the marriage feast the Fathers and Doctors of the Church would have us see a type of the spiritual union between God and the faithful soul. It is a feast at which she must always take the lowest place. God alone, who sees her *as she is*, can whisper in her ear, when He sees she is ripe for more intimate union with Him: 'Friend, come up higher.'

The lesson of the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost (Eph. ch. iv.) carries on the teaching we received in the gospel of the previous Sunday. St. Paul beseeches us to walk worthy of the vocation in which we are called, 'with all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' Mildness and patience are the fruits of

[1] *Time after Pentecost*, iii. 364.

humility; without these there is no unity. Schisms have ever had their root in pride. These three virtues unite us in the bond of peace. 'Bond most admirable which unites us all mutually with one another, and then thus united unites us with God.'[1]

In the gospel (Matt. ch. xxii.) of this Sunday our Lord, in answer to the scribe 'tempting Him,' tells him which is the great commandment of the law. He is our faith and our love, 'the end of all our resolutions,' says St. Augustine, 'for all our efforts tend but to this, to perfect ourselves in Him; and this is our perfection, to reach Him. Having reached Him, seek no further, for He is your end.'[2]

Ember Days

The Church, as a faithful mother, lays before us in the autumn season of the year the necessity of propitiating the anger of God, 'which we have deserved by our sins,' by the practice of prayer joined with fasting. There are only two roads, we learn from the teaching of the Gospel, to heaven; that of innocence, and that of penance. How few can plead the former! But even should they be justified in doing so, they are not excused from obedience to the commands of the Church. The duty of expiation for the sins of others will always remain, likewise the duty of charity; for the prayer of the faithful joined to penance is most powerful both for the living and the dead. Thus do we fulfil the divine precept: 'Bear ye one another's burthens, for so do ye fulfil the law of Christ.'

St. Paul, in the epistle of the Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost (1 Cor. ch. i.), holds out the prospect of the coming of our Lord as an incentive to perseverance in the grace of God, and the practice of virtue. This is a thought that is

[1] St. John Chrysostom *in Ep. ad Eph.*
[2] *Time after Pentecost*, ii. 396.

continually put before us by inspired writers, and is it not one which should be all-powerful with the Christian? 'Yet a little while, and a very little while, and He that is to come will come, and will not delay.' A short time of anguish and mourning, of doing violence to our evil passions, of taking up the cross and following our Master, and we shall be at the end of our trial, in possession of our eternal Home. 'Come quickly.'

The gospel of this Sunday (Matt. ch. ix.) is that recording the healing of the paralytic, when the scribes accuse our Lord of blaspheming because He bids the man 'be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.' How often since have the enemies of the Church accused her in the same terms, and protested with the scribes: 'God alone hath power to forgive sins;' and still, as an instrument in God's hands, she continues to exercise her ministry of peace and healing, carrying out the Divine mandate: 'Whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them!'

The epistle of the Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, from St. Paul to the Ephesians (ch. iv.), is one of charity and good-will to all men. In the first verse he gives us the clue to the lesson he inculcates: 'Be renewed,' he says, 'in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth.' Unless we renew our minds—in other words, make a fresh start in union with Jesus, our Divine Head—how useless are all our good resolutions and intentions! Without His divine aid, how can we expect to stand firm in the presence of temptation, or to persevere in the practice of charity and holiness and truth? He who is united to God can alone say: 'God is in the midst of us, we shall not be moved.'

The gospel (Matt. ch. xxii.) of this Sunday gives the history of 'a king who made a marriage for his son.' We are all invited to this marriage feast, but have we all provided ourselves with the wedding garment? The Fathers of the

Church tell us that this mystic garment represents charity—love of God and man. In the parable of the virgins we are told that the five virgins who, when the summons came, had no oil, hurried out to buy it, and returned to find that the doors were closed against them. We have all our lives given to us to provide ourselves with a wedding garment. Let us, by fervent love of God, showing itself in charity for our neighbour as His representative, provide ourselves with this garment, so that it may be ready when we are summoned to the feast.

The reflections St. Paul wishes us to make in the epistle of the Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost (Eph. ch. v.) are on the shortness of time. 'See therefore,' he says, 'that ye walk circumspectly: not as unwise, but as wise: redeeming the time, because the days are evil.' And the means he urges of doing so are truly supernatural: 'Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit,' he says, 'speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.' Shall we be tempted to call this 'a hard saying?' No! for the heart that truly loves thinks willingly on the beloved. Therefore let us cultivate a great love of God in our hearts, and thus redeem the time in the days that are left to us.

The gospel for this Sunday (St. John, ch. iv.) gives the history of the cure of the son of the Ruler of Capharnaum. Holy Church puts before us at intervals the stories of the wonderful miracles of our Saviour, in order to renew our faith and confidence in Him. As He hearkened then to the prayer of the sorrowing father, so He will hearken to us now. His arm is not shortened, He is ever ready and attentive to hear us. The more we ask, if we ask humbly, submitting in all things to His Will, the more we honour Him. 'Let us,' says Tertullian, 'assemble together in one body, that we may, so to speak, offer armed violence to God by our prayers. God loves such violence as that.'

The epistle (Eph. ch. vi.) of the Twenty-first Sunday after

Pentecost is one of warning to all the soldiers of Christ's army on earth to be prepared for warfare with the evil one. And in order to be prepared to resist his assaults we 'must put on the armour of God.' This armour is our holy Faith, which girds us about with truth, puts us on the breast-plate of justice, and causes our 'feet to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.'

The gospel is from the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew, which gives us the parable in which the kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who would take an account of his servants. The lesson we are to learn from it is compassion to our fellow-sinner in this vale of tears. 'By forgiving him his sins,' St. John Chrysostom tells us, 'we imitate God.' What an incentive to show mercy and forgiveness to those around us, that by doing so we are following the example of Christ Himself in His dealings with us; and what a plea for mercy, if we have done so, when we appear before His judgment seat! He alone can say the 'Our Father' with a clear conscience who forgives every man from his heart.

Feast of All Saints

This feast is one of special rejoicing with the Church of God, and the office is full of this note of joy and exultation.

First Antiphon. O fear the Lord, all ye His saints, for there is no want to them that fear Him. Behold, the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry.

Second Antiphon. O Lord, Thou hast been a shelter for Thy saints, a strong tower from the enemy. Thou hast given the heritage to those that fear Thy Name, and they shall abide in Thy tabernacle for ever.

Third Antiphon. Ye that love the Lord, rejoice in the Lord, and give thanks in the remembrance of His holiness.

Lesson taken from Venerable Bede. Dearly beloved brethren: This day we keep with one great cry of joy a feast in memory of all God's holy children; His children, whose presence is a glad-

ness to heaven; His children, whose prayers are a blessing to earth; His children, whose victories are the crown of the Holy Church; His chosen, whose testifying is the more glorious in honour as the agony in which it was given was the sterner, and the heavier the torment, the heavier the prize. And it is our Mother, the Catholic Church, spread far and wide, throughout all this planet: it is She that hath learnt in Christ Jesus, her Head, not to fear shame, nor cross, nor death, but hath waxed lealer and lealer, and, not by fighting but by enduring, hath breathed into all the noble band who have come up to the bitter starting-post, the hope of conquest and glory which hath warmed them manfully to accept the race.

Responsory. At midnight there was a cry made: Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! Go ye out to meet Him.

V. Trim your lamps, O ye wise virgins.

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! Go ye out to meet Him! Glory be, etc.

The epistle of the Mass for this feast is from the Apocalypse (ch. vii.). Let us join with this 'great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne, and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cried with a loud voice, saying: "Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb."'

The gospel (Matt. ch. v.) is that of the eight Beatitudes. How tender and consoling are the promises of our Lord to those who follow Him! To possess His kingdom, to see Him, to obtain mercy, to be called His children, no desperate difficulties are to be overcome, no wonders to be wrought. His yoke is sweet and His burthen light; and, lest the persecutions His children are threatened with, the 'great tribulations' through which some have passed before they obtained their crown, should dismay us, we read in the offertory of this Mass: 'The souls of the just are in the hands of God, and the torment of malice shall not touch them: in the sight

of the unwise they seemed to die, but they are in peace. Alleluia.'

All Souls

This day is dedicated by Holy Church to prayer and intercession for the Faithful departed. Let us do our utmost during this day and throughout the month of November to help them by our prayers and suffrages. In this pious endeavour we join with all the Church militant on earth and the Church triumphant in heaven. As it is a work of fraternal charity and love, we may believe that it is one specially pleasing to the loving Heart of Jesus, and to the tender heart of Mary, besides gaining for us many friends on the eternal shore who will in turn be our intercessors in our time of trial. The epistle puts before us the consoling words of the Apostle (1 Cor. xv.) on the great mystery of death. And in the gospel (John ch. v.) we read how 'Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews: Amen, amen, I say unto you that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given the Son also to have life in Himself; and He hath given Him power to do judgment, because He is the Son of man.' These souls have been redeemed by the Precious Blood of the Son of God; they are most dear to Him; let us plead, then, with great confidence for their speedy release, that they may join the angelic choir and praise and bless their Lord and Redeemer for all eternity.

The epistle for the Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost (Philip. ch. i.) begins as follows: 'Brethren, we are confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus.' What is this good work which has been begun in us? It is the work of our conversion—our turning to God and beginning a new life entirely consecrated to His love and service. What this

life should be he tells us further on. 'This I pray (he says) that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding.' Our charity, our love and service of God, therefore, should not be an ignorant, a blind service. It should be a *reasonable* one. To do this we must dedicate our *minds* as well as our hearts to God. This is the test of our love of God; unless we can stand it we have no true love of Him.

The gospel is from St. Matthew (ch. xxii.): 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' All authority comes from God. In obeying the law, therefore, we obey Him. But if we have no difficulty as regards the first part of this commandment, can we feel equally satisfied about the last? To God belongs all that we have, our wealth, influence, power, minds, and hearts, even our very lives. Do we behave as if He had a right to them? Let us ask ourselves this question, on which so much depends.

St. Paul, in the epistle of the Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost, tells us to walk after the pattern of our Model: 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping) that they are enemies of the Cross of Christ.' What is it to be an enemy of the Cross of Christ? Is it not to seek enjoyment, the comforts of life, happiness in *this* world? And yet is this not instinctive in our very natures, such as God made them? Yes, nature seeks all these things; but grace, that second nature—which it is the very test of a Christian that he should have assumed—acts differently. St. Paul goes on to say: 'But our conversation is in heaven,' and there he gives the explanation, the key to the enigma. If our hearts are raised to heaven, if our minds are occupied with the great truths of salvation, if our lips are occupied with the praise of God, it is easy to love the Cross of Christ and even—with St. Paul—to be nailed to it.

In the gospel of this Sunday (Matt. ch. ix.) we read of

two miracles of our Divine Lord, one of the daughter of the ruler, and the other of the woman 'who was troubled with an issue of blood.' We read of the latter that she came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment; for she said within herself: 'If I touch only His garment I shall be healed.' How often we approach our Divine Saviour, not only to touch His garment, but to receive Him wholly and truly in the Sacrament of the Altar! Is it want of faith or confidence that prevents our being healed?

The epistle of the Twenty-fourth and last[1] Sunday after Pentecost (Coloss. ch. i.) exhorts us to 'walk worthy of God in all things pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' The spiritual life—that is, the life of a soul with God—is never stationary; if it is not advancing it goes back. At the end of the ecclesiastical year our Mother the Church therefore exhorts us, in the words of the Apostle, to *increase* in the only knowledge that will serve our turn in the day of Reckoning, and it must not be theoretical knowledge, but fruitful in good work.

In the gospel (Matt. ch. xxiv.) we read of the awful judgment which is one day to come on all mankind: 'when there shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world.' Let us meditate on these words of warning of our Divine Saviour's, remembering that great trials, of one sort or other, are in store for each one of us. We have all to undergo the punishment of death, 'and after this the judgment.' The prophet says: 'With desolation is the whole land made desolate, because no man considereth in his heart.'

[1] If there are more than twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost, the additional number are taken from the Sundays after the Epiphany. See Missal.

THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH THY WHOLE MIND

We have said in the introductory chapter that one of the trials of a Catholic newly received into the Church is that of loneliness. He has outstripped his friends or relations, and very frequently he finds himself alone; and this at a time when, humanly speaking, he is more in want than he has ever been in his life of sympathy, kind words, and encouragement. He will most probably have met with opposition from his Protestant friends; but there is another kind of opposition, of an even more determined kind, which he will have met with in his own heart, for the foe from within is ever harder to deal with than the foe from without.

For a conversion is never effected without great laceration of the soul. It is a break with the past, more or less violent, which, though faith forces it on the soul and supports her through it, can never be done without severe inward trial, though that trial is often mitigated to the sufferer by a great sense of God's goodness in the grace of conversion. There are also many reasons of the natural kind—and nature has to be taken into consideration as well as grace—why this trial should be one of peculiar severity.

Unquestionably a man in becoming a Catholic has had to make a considerable effort; in familiar phrase, to work himself up to it. For the moment he was under a strong impulse

of grace, the kind of grace which in time of persecution has converted a commonplace Christian into a hero and martyr. It is in the nature of things, therefore, that he should undergo, afterwards, a reaction.

We are all inclined, the world, the flesh, and the devil being on that side, to put away from us as much as possible the great thought of our salvation, and all that is dependent upon it. But we will suppose that circumstances have forced it upon us ; grace has been powerful within us, and has conquered, and we are received into the Church. It has been an effort. We do not regret it ; far from it ; but nature is inclined to take her revenge, and that revenge will always be to get us to slide back into the easy way of taking things which came so naturally to us before our conversion.

On the days, or months, following our conversion much will depend. It will be either a time of rapid progress, if we have responded fervently to the graces God has been prepared to give us in return for the sacrifices we have made, or it will be a time of gradual cooling down from our first fervours and a return to the life we led before, *plus* a thin veneer of Catholicity. Besides, in this as in all questions that affect our souls, there are always two factors : God and ourselves. It is possible that we may earnestly desire to keep up that sensible fervour which we had on first entering the Church, or, it may be, in the time that preceded it ; but it is gone, and the question is, how shall we avoid relapsing into tepidity without it ?

It is an undoubted fact that God withdraws, sometimes, for reasons unknown to us, but to which we must humbly submit, the light of His countenance—that is, sensible devotion—after we have taken this great step. This experience is such a common one with converts that it is as well to be prepared for it. 'Milk for babes,' the Apostle tells us, 'and meat for strong men,' but at times it seems to our little knowledge that God has withdrawn His milk from us before

we are able to digest stronger food. The Scripture gives us a most useful counsel at this time : 'Make not haste,' we are told, 'in the time of clouds. Humble thy soul and endure. Wait on God with patience. Take all that shall be brought upon thee, and in thy sorrow endure.' (Ecclus. ii. 2–4.) Men do not run on a rough road in a dark night; neither must we, or we risk a fall. Let us be satisfied in this time of trial to cling to the resolutions we made in our time of fervour, above all to persevere in our recourse to the Sacraments and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, for these are the great means of grace, and grace means light, if not *now*—for we know not how long the trial may last—yet assuredly in the long run. The virtue of humility is also one that we should make a point not only of seeking opportunities of practising, but asking of God in prayer. 'God resists the proud, and gives His grace to the humble.' And again : 'The prayer of the humble man pierceth the clouds.'

We shall find many opportunities of practising humility when we become Catholics, for which we ought gratefully to thank God. These occasions will come from within as well as from without. From within, because in the very fact of our submission to the Church, though the consciousness that we have done so has brought great peace, still it is at the sacrifice of our pride of judgment. We have obeyed Christ's injunction, and received the kingdom of heaven as a little child, but to human nature the struggle was a hard one; and though we accepted the position once for all, it is not God's will that the temptation to go back to what we have renounced should be disposed of so easily. A solid humility, and a great devotion to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, whose special mission it is to teach all truth, will be of great help to us. It is to the presence of the Holy Spirit in His Church and in our souls that we owe that 'joy and peace in believing' which is the glorious heritage of the Catholic, and which we shall never lose except through our

own fault. Occasions of humility will come to us also from without; for humiliations are the livery of Jesus Christ. We must 'go forth therefore to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.'

There is no doubt, even in these days of so-called enlightenment, no one can become Catholic in this country without being aware that a black mark has been set against his name.[1] It entails a loss of reputation to him which he will have to retrieve in other ways, by brilliant talents, or great success in his special walk of life; and even then he will probably be made aware in an unmistakable manner that he will have this prejudice to fight against in his journey through life. No Catholic should ever attempt (nor probably ever does so attempt) to minimize this fact when discussing it with a non-Catholic, or intending convert. It is one of the marks of the religion of Jesus Christ. But in many cases the opposition which the convert will meet with goes to much greater lengths. In this country, as we all know, nothing is more common than for children to be turned out of doors, sons and daughters to be disinherited, servants even in places of trust, and those employed in public offices, to lose their situations.

To these our Divine Saviour's words are especially addressed: 'Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake.' For, as the gentle St. Francis of Sales tells us, 'Persecutions are pieces of the cross of Jesus Christ; we should grieve very much at allowing so much as a particle of them to be lost. Let us, then, unite our cross with the

[1] Hare, (Anglican) Bishop of Chichester, observes that in England: 'The misfortunes a man of unblemished life may bring upon himself by his religious opinions are such as the vilest and most immoral wretch is in no danger of.' (*The Month*, February 1901, p. 143.) In the history of human inconsistencies is there a more singular page than that which records the persistent persecution by a Church founded on revolt from authority and a substitution for it of the right of private judgment?

cross of Him who saved us, and by this loving and devout union of our sufferings with the sufferings and cross of Jesus Christ we shall enter into His friendship and company in Paradise.' We may be sure that there are no prayers which are more pleasing to God, and more certain to be heard, than those we offer up for our persecutors, especially when we make the intention of uniting them with the prayer of Jesus Christ to His Father: 'Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.' How frequently, in every one's experience, is this prayer answered in the conversion of friends and relations of converts who were at first the most vigorous in their denunciations of them!

Let us suppose, therefore, that we have allowed the words of Scripture which we have quoted to sink into our hearts, that we have taken no important step without due deliberation, and if necessary with the advice of our confessor. We have prayed. We have accepted the humiliations the world has been ready to inflict on us with peaceful and even grateful hearts, seeing in them only the hand of God and the means of our sanctification. What then remains for us to do?

The answer must still be: A great deal remains to be done.

God asks of us, in the first Commandment, that we should love Him with our whole hearts, and our whole souls, and our whole minds. Most people realise, to a certain extent, that they must love God in a paramount sense: that is, be willing for love of Him to give up whatever is opposed to His law; but how few reflect that, besides in this way submitting their wills to Him, they must also love Him with their souls and their minds. We all know what it is to give our minds to a thing, and equally what it is to throw our hearts (to use the ordinary expression) into any special occupation or pursuit. The question, therefore, is: do we give our minds to such an extent to the knowledge of the

service of God as would justify us in looking forward at the Last Day to hearing that we had fulfilled this, the *first* and *primary* law of God? Let us, in order to ascertain how we stand in this respect, consider our past lives. We have probably in the days or months preceding our reception into the Church—perhaps for a much longer time—read up the subject of Church history and certain theological works, probably more or less of a controversial kind, on the Mass, the Sacraments, and so forth. We did all this with the view of studying the claims of the Catholic Church to our allegiance; but having proved this to our satisfaction, and acted upon it, is that sufficient? Should we rest there? The words of the first and greatest Commandment are a sufficient answer to this question.

To begin with, there are a great many reasons why we should use our minds, or, to put the matter in a simple and concrete form, cultivate a taste for reading spiritual books, after we have become Catholics. There is a quite astonishing amount to be learned about the Church, its origin, history, philosophy, the lives of the Saints, of the Popes, theologians, great men—the list of subjects might be increased to an indefinite length.

It will, perhaps, be urged that Catholics do not spend their lives in these studies. The very obvious answer to this is that Catholics start with a large fund of knowledge on these matters which they pick up at their father's or mother's knee, at the spiritual retreats made by them at their First Communion, their Confirmation, or at their catechetical instructions in boyhood and youth. All this knowledge of years is wanting in the case of converts, and cannot be made up in the course of a few weeks or months of, perhaps, not very systematic instruction.

Again, we have much to unlearn as well as to learn, as converts, and though our opinions may be quite sound as far as the fundamental truths of religion are concerned, unless

we take the trouble to study the Catholic view on many of the burning questions of the day, we shall find ourselves unconsciously biassed by the prejudiced views (never really corrected) of our youth, and so drift unconsciously into opposition from ignorance of all that can be urged on the other side.

We should read, therefore, in order to supply ourselves with matter for devotional meditation and for the sake of instruction. With the first object the Lives of the Saints and the Sacred Scriptures will offer an inexhaustible store of pious thoughts and reflections to us. The Lives of the Saints are, as it were, the maxims of the Catholic Church in action, her precepts of perfection embodied. We cannot read them without raising our standard of belief in what nature is capable of under the influence of Divine grace; and as man is very much influenced by his ideals, this will react on our own lives and prevent their sinking into the worldly and material routine of the lives that are led around us. But it is to the Scriptures we must turn, and especially to the four Gospels, in order to acquire that supernatural atmosphere which more than anything else goes to make up the character of an interior man. Probably we have been accustomed all our lives to read chapters of the New Testament, and have learned many passages by heart. All this is so much useful information and has brought many into the possession of the truth; but we must go back to it now with an entirely fresh knowledge founded on the teaching of the Church, whose special mission it is to dispense the Scriptures to the faithful, so that they may be formed again on their Divine model through the teaching and inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

Jesus Christ, and Him crucified! This is the one lesson which we should set ourselves to learn on becoming Catholics. Everything that is put before us in the Church of God, whether it is in the Lives of the Saints or that of

God's blessed Mother (for there is no shorter way to Jesus than by Mary), is with this object; and there is no quicker way of attaining to it than by a continual meditation on the adorable Person of the Son of God as revealed to us in the Gospels and in the daily Liturgy of the Church. The *ethos* of the New Testament is the *ethos* of the Church. The counsels of perfection: poverty, chastity, and obedience, the life of contemplation, the love of the Cross and self-denial, the Apostolate of intercessory prayer, all these things spring from the life and teachings of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, and receive their complement and fulfilment in the Church of God. Out of the Church they are meaningless—barren trees bearing no fruit.

Is there a more strange and impressive scene in Bible history than the one which we read of in the Gospel of St. Luke: 'Jesus went into the synagogue according to His custom on the Sabbath-day, and He rose up to read. And the book of Isaias the prophet was delivered unto Him. And as He unfolded the book He found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, wherefore He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart: to preach deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of reward." And when He had folded the book, He restored it to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him, and He began to say to them: This day is fulfilled this Scripture in your ears.'

What a scene! What a moment in the history of man! The Son of God explains His own Scripture, and points out its fulfilment in His own person, and with what result? St. Luke tells us: 'And all they that were in the synagogue, hearing these things, were filled with anger. And they rose up and thrust Him out of the city' (Luke iv. 16–29).

Man of his own knowledge can never attain to the true meaning of the Scriptures. Christ could not have put this great truth before us in a more unmistakable manner than He did in the words of St. Luke. It was not, however, on this occasion only that our Lord gave us this lesson; we know from many passages in the Gospels that the disciples, in spite of the constant companionship of their Divine Master, had very dim comprehension of either His doctrines or mission to man. Their eyes were shut to the striking fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament in His regard. His Resurrection took all—even the loving John, who had leaned on His breast, and the impetuous Peter, the future Head of His Church—completely by surprise. Their last words to Him before He ascended to heaven show the same singular ignorance of the wonderful succession of divine events—the greatest the world has ever witnessed—which had taken place under their eyes.

The explanation is one with which we are all familiar. The last words of our Divine Saviour to His disciples had been: 'It is expedient to you that I go, for if I go not the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go I will send Him to you. And when He is come He will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believed not in me; and of justice, because I go to the Father and you shall see me no longer; and of judgment, because the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth. For He shall not speak of Himself, but what things soever He shall hear He shall speak, and the things that are to come He shall show you' (John xvi. 7–13).

It is therefore to the knowledge imparted by the Holy Ghost to the Apostles, when He descended upon them under the form of fiery tongues on Whit Sunday, and His continual abiding in the Church founded on the Rock, Peter, that she

owes her infallibility in interpreting the Scriptures. In the written Word of God, as the Fathers of the Church explain to us, we possess a storehouse of most precious medicines for the soul of man. In it we shall find all we require for our spiritual health and necessities. But he that should venture, unauthorised and ignorant, to enter into this storehouse, rob the great Keeper, and administer the drugs in reckless profusion to all who ask of him, is dealing out death, instead of life, to man.

'The letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth.'

'The truth of Scripture,' as St. Jerome well says, 'is not in the words, but in the sense: *nec putemus in verbis Scripturarum esse Evangelium, sed in sensu.* How is it, then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath an interpretation! *Quot homines, tot sententiæ.*'[1] To whom has God given the right to interpret the Scriptures but to His Church? Of those outside her fold she asks, as Tertullian did in the third century: 'Who are you? Whence do you come? What business have you, strangers, with my property? By what right are you, Marcion, felling my trees? By what authority are you, Valentinus, turning the course of my streams? Under what pretence are you, Apelles, removing my landmarks? The estate is mine; I have the ancient possession of it. I have the title-deeds, delivered to me by the original proprietors. I am the heir of the Apostles; they have made their will in my favour, while they have disinherited and cast you off as strangers and enemies.'[2]

The Scriptures are the gift of God to His spouse, the Church. It is conceivable that she could have brought up children to Him without the written Word, for has she not the promise: 'I will give you pastors according to my own heart, and they shall feed you with knowledge and doctrine?'

[1] *Comm. in Gal.* c. i.; Stone's *The Invitation Heeded*, p. 145.
[2] Tertullian, *De Præscript.* c. xix.; Stone, p. 148.

(Jer. ch. iii. 15). But God's gifts are ever superabundant, 'full measure, and pressed down, and poured into our bosoms,' and so it is with this divine gift of God to man. But that it was not necessary for the Bible to be in the hand of each one we learn from the order of God's Providence; for it was not till the end of the fifth century that the Canon of Scripture was definitely established, and even then it was clearly no part of the Divine economy that it should be universally read, for, till the art of printing was discovered, the Bible was the exclusive property of the rich and lettered classes. Strange discrepancy to those who teach that 'the Bible, and the Bible only,' is their religion; the mission of the Son of man was to the poor, and for fifteen hundred years they were to be kept out of their inheritance! And stranger still (from the non-Catholic point of view) during that time the Church, with comparatively short interludes, enjoyed the full plenitude of that peace which was a complete answer to the prayer of Christ for His disciples and followers.

The Church, therefore, dispenses the Word of God to the faithful, and it is on the devout use of it, and frequent meditations on the mysteries of divine faith that are contained in it, that the interior life is founded; and this life, these holy contemplations, are as much a part of the life of the poor, as easily accessible and open to them, in the Church of God, as to the rich. If we take the trouble to study the popular devotions in the Church we shall find that all, down to the smallest detail, owe their origin to some portion of the written Word of God.

The Sacrifice of the Mass, the central feature of the Catholic worship, is, in its prayers and psalms, its allusions and the types which prefigured it, almost wholly Scriptural. The Rosary, composed of the Our Father and Hail Mary, is mainly Scriptural, and the mysteries which are contemplated whilst the prayers are recited are drawn throughout, with a

single exception, from the Gospels. The *Angelus*, in which three times a day the Church venerates the great mystery of the Incarnation, is taken principally from the Scriptures. The Way of the Cross, in which the devout Christian follows our Lord from one station to another, lovingly compassionating His sufferings and death on Mount Calvary, is likewise drawn from the same source. Even in the Litany of our Lady the many different titles by which she is addressed have their source and origin in the Bible ; and it is the same with regard to all the other Catholic popular devotions.

To return to what has previously been said, we should read for the sake of cultivating a spirit of devotion, and also for the sake of instruction, in order not only to make sure of the groundwork of our faith, but to be able to give to those around us a reason for the faith that is in us. It is constantly urged against Catholics that in entering the Church they surrender the entire use of their reason. From that moment there can be no further interest in study, or free discussion of any kind, for the Church blocks all expression of independent opinion by the obedience she exacts on any important point of her doctrine. This is quite true as regards matters of faith : that is to say, doctrines on which the Pope, in his quality of guardian of the sacred deposit of the Apostles, speaking *ex cathedra* to all believers, either alone or in Council, has decided ; but apart from these points what an enormous field is open to the investigation of all even in the domain of philosophy and theology ! And that great liberty is granted, and that Catholic writers freely avail themselves of it, witness the great schools of Christian thought, the Thomist and Scotist of the thirteenth century, and many succeeding ones down to the present day.

In fact, if on the one hand Catholics are reproached with too great rigidity of doctrine, on the other they may be told : ' You cannot find the truth in Rome, for there are as many divisions there as in the National Communion.' To

this Newman responds: 'Who would not suppose the objection to mean that these divisions were such as to make it difficult or impossible to ascertain what it was that the Roman communion taught? Who would not suppose it to mean that there was within the communion of Rome a difference of creed and of dogmatic teaching? whereas the state of the case is just the reverse. No one can pretend that the quarrels in the Catholic Church are questions of faith, or have tended in any way to obscure or impair what she declares to be such, and what is acknowledged to be such by the very parties in those quarrels. That Dominicans and Franciscans have been zealous respectively for certain doctrinal views which they declare at the same time to be beyond and in advance of the promulgated faith of the Church throws no doubt upon that faith itself; how does it follow that they differ in questions of faith because they differ in questions not of faith? Rather, I would say, if a number of parties distinct from each other give the same testimony on certain points, their differences on other points do but strengthen the evidence for the truth of those matters in which they are all agreed; and the greater the difference the more remarkable is the unanimity. The question is: "*Where* can I be taught, who cannot be taught by the National Communion because it does not teach?" and the Protestant warning runs, "Not in the Catholic Church, because she, in spite of differences on subordinate points amongst her members, *does* teach." In truth, she not only teaches in spite of those differences, but she has ever taught by means of them. Those very differences of Catholics on further points have themselves implied and brought out their absolute faith in the doctrines which are previous to them. The doctrines of faith are the common basis of the combatants, the ground on which they contend, their ultimate authority and their arbitrating rule. They are assumed, and introduced, and commented on, and enforced, in every stage

of the alternate disputation; and I will venture to say that, if you wish to get a good view of the unity, consistency, solidity, and reality of Catholic teaching your best way is to get up a controversy on grace, or on the Immaculate Conception. No one can do so without acquiring a mass of theological knowledge, and sinking in his intellect a foundation of dogmatic truth, which is simply antecedent and common to the rival schools and which they do but exhibit and elucidate. To suppose that they perplex an inquirer or a convert is to fancy that litigation destroys the principle and science of law, or that spelling out words of five syllables makes a child forget his alphabet.'[1] How few Catholics appreciate the impregnable position of the Catholic Church in the presence of her rivals and assailants! Still fewer make any effort to increase their knowledge of her history and development in past ages.

No one, in recent times, has given greater impetus to the study of the Church in the light of history than the present illustrious occupant of the Papal Chair, Pope Leo XIII. In giving every facility of access to the Vatican library to students, he has at the same time incited the learned in all countries to study the grounds of their belief in the records of the past. Increase of knowledge must ever mean increase of light, and therefore of faith, if this knowledge is drawn from a pure source, and not from poisoned wells, as, unfortunately, is too often the case in the literature of this country. 'It cannot be too frequently impressed on the mind that truth is essentially *one*, and that all truth, scientific, religious, moral, social, or whatever it may be, originates from one and the same source, and cannot, therefore, be in conflict with itself. Any conflict which may seem to exist between truth in one order and truth in another shows that either the truth has been imperfectly perceived, or that falsehood has been mistaken for truth. Christianity can never

[1] *Anglican Difficulties*, p. 271.

come into collision with scientific truth. Both are alike divine. Hence Christianity fears no scientific discovery, or proof, for she regards natural science as the handmaid and ally of religious science. It is only when hypothesis is substituted for proof that religion protests.' [1]

Especially interesting to Catholics, and little known as a rule by them, are the early records of the Primitive Church. It is there perhaps, better than almost anywhere else, that we can see the rise and growth of Catholicity from its very inception, in contrast with the early beginnings of any of the modern religious bodies which have since proposed themselves to the belief of man.

So far, we have endeavoured as much as possible to keep clear of controversy; and if we venture for a moment on well-trodden ground, it is only that we may bring out more clearly the position of the Catholic Church with regard to that of her rivals.

Tertullian lays down this weighty axiom in one of his writings: 'Every sort of thing must necessarily revert to its original for its classification.' Let us see how the Protestant Church stands the test conveyed in these words.

Luther in casting about to find a text, as he himself tells us, to quiet his conscience in its anxiety about a future state —or, as others might put it, as a doctrinal weapon against the Holy See—comes across the famous one on which the dogma of justification by faith was founded: 'For we account a man justified by faith without the works of the law' (Rom. ch. iii. 28). The text as it stands could hardly support the weight of argument Luther was prepared to build upon it; for in the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul tells us: 'And we are saved by hope' (Rom. ch. viii. 24). Again in his first Epistle to the Corinthians he says: 'And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greater of these is charity' (1 Cor. ch. xiii. 13). The possession of

[1] *Christianity or Agnosticism?* p. 191

faith, hope, and charity, the theological virtues, was therefore equally necessary, according to the teaching of Holy Scripture, in order to ensure eternal salvation, and this doctrine consequently was that of the Catholic Church. But Luther was not easily to be put aside from his purpose; and by inserting the word *only* after 'faith,' he changed the sense of the original text to the one which suited his purpose; and in spite of protests from all sides, it stands thus in the German authorised version of the Bible to this day.[1] We know that upon this garbled text and on the doctrine of private judgment—the two articles of the Protestant religion to which Luther refers in his writings as pre-eminently 'the doctrines'—he was prepared, with his adherents, to stand or fall.

Logically, the religion founded by Luther, and followed, though with considerable variation, by Calvin, Beza, Melanchthon, and numberless others, was condemned by the very terms on which it was put forth to the world for belief; for private judgment cuts the ground away, so to speak, under faith.

Private judgment, even when exercised on the sure Word of God, must ever mean but the force of our own convictions. Now, as we all know, our convictions vary; they are not always the same. They are led by what we see and hear, by a hundred influences which we can hardly account for: so that the force of an argument which moved us strongly yesterday has lost its power to-day. No one, unless by confusion of terms, could call these opinions by the name of faith. The objects of our faith cannot be our own opinions or convictions. They must have authority for them, and this must be derived from God; and Catholics find this authority in the doctrines put before them to be believed by

[1] The words of Zuinglius are recorded: 'Luther, thou corruptest the Word of God. Thou art seen to be a manifest and common corrupter and perverter of Holy Scripture.'—*Catholic Belief*, p. 382.

the Church instituted by Him. 'Protestant faith, therefore, is only something which goes by the name of faith. Protestants believe their own opinions. But faith is the submission of the understanding to an authority external to ourselves which can neither deceive nor be deceived.'[1] 'Every Catholic believes, therefore, according to Holy Writ, that he is "taught of God" (1 Thes. iv. 9), so that instead of being at the mercy of any man cleverer than himself, more versed in argument or better read, and thus blown about by every wind of doctrine (Ephes. iv. 14), his feet are on a rock—fixed on the immutable Word of God. As St. John Chrysostom says on Romans (iv. 20): "Faith is clearer than proof from argument, and more convincing, for it is impossible for any second argument to come atop of it and make it totter. He that is convinced by argument may be unconvinced again; but he that rests on faith has stopped his ears against all argument that could mar his faith."'[2]

If we examine the claims of the Church of England in the light of these fundamental truths, we are confronted with a further difficulty—namely that of ascertaining her definite teaching on any given subject. For the cleavage in that Church is of such a nature that to speak of it in the sense of the Catholic aspirations of the High Church would be to commit ourselves to statements which would be indignantly repudiated by the Low and Broad Church party. Manning, whose knowledge of the Anglican Church was thorough, and whom no one would accuse of undue harshness in his estimate of it, said that in the great cataclysm of the Reformation the Church in England split up into two halves, the Puritan, or Evangelical, party preserving its spirit while the High Church clung to the form; the Catholic Church alone possessing both, in due subordination one to the other. An examination of the successive formularies of

[1] Stone's *The Invitation Heeded*, p. 112.
[2] Rickaby's *Oxford Conferences*, p. 61.

the Anglican Church shows that it was swayed in turn by the party or ruler who for the moment dominated its councils and dictated their terms. The Edwardine prayer-book bears the mark of Cranmer and of the German school of theology by which he was influenced; the revised edition of 1661–2 that of the Caroline divines whose counsels then prevailed. A claim to infallibility was never put forward by the Anglican Church. On the contrary, all Churches, it maintained in its Articles of Religion, had erred. The Patriarchates of both East and West had fallen into error; consequently it professed to return to the faith and practices of the Primitive Church.

The Primitive ages have ever been the battlefield of the Churches, each claiming to find their doctrines in the writings, and still more in the lives and practices, of the early Christians. In the sixteenth century it was safe to appeal to a time about which so little was accurately known; but since those days a series of remarkable discoveries have cleared the atmosphere to an extraordinary extent, and have let us become acquainted with the lives and devotional practices of the early Christian down to the smallest details. The discoveries in the Catacombs, and the frescoes both in the underground church of San Clemente and in the chapels of the Catacombs of S. Callista and S. Agnese, show the absolute identity of the Church's doctrines of those days with those she puts before her children for their belief at the present moment. All the doctrines most denounced by the Reformers, and declared by them to be innovations of the Middle Ages, are to be seen there, dimly, yet unmistakably, on the pictured walls. In one we see Moses striking the rock—the type of baptism; in another, the Good Shepherd; but the favourite one, which is repeated constantly in all these cubicula, as they are called, is the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and especially the fish, both in Christ's hands and in baskets—emblem of our Lord in

the Holy Eucharist: the fish (*ichthys*) signifying Jesus Christ.[1] The Blessed Virgin and Child are also constantly represented. As Picard says: 'The whole of Catholicism may be found in the Catacombs. Inscriptions repeat the teachings of art, and whether in the subterranean galleries or in the admirable epigraphic museum of the Lateran, their witness appeals to the eye at every step. . . . In our own day Louis le Blanc[2] and Paul Allard[3] both prove it decisively. M. Aube, a Rationalist, admits it. The doctrines proclaimed by the inscriptions in the formulas of the second and third centuries are—the cultus of the Blessed Virgin; the primacy of St. Peter; the sacrifice of the Mass; prayer for the dead; faith in the intercession of the saints and in the invocation of angels; the veneration of relics and images; the adoration of the Cross.' The Divine institution of the episcopate, and the exercise of its jurisdiction in the first century, are likewise confirmed.[4] 'Whoever studies the Fathers conscientiously and without prejudice will be convinced, with Gibbon, that "no well-informed man can gainsay the historical fact that all through the first four centuries of the Church Catholic principles were already recognized, both in theory and in practice."'[5]

It is not, however, in the discovery of the inscriptions and frescoes of the Catacombs only that fresh light has been thrown on the practices and devotions of the Primitive Church. The discovery in recent times of part of the letter of the Pope, St. Clement, written in the year 95 or 96—that is, about sixty-six years, or two generations, after the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles—to the Church of Corinth, is

[1] The initials of the words 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour,' in Greek made up the word ΙΧΘΥΣ.

[2] *Monuments of Christian Epigraphy* (*Christianity or Agnosticism?* p. 464).

[3] *Roma Sotterranea.*

[4] *Sur les Origines de l'Episcopat*, by M. l'Abbé Duchesne.

[5] *Christianity or Agnosticism?* p. 464.

most important from an historical point of view, and proves unmistakably the authority of the successor in the See of Peter over the Christian world. Allies, in his work on 'Church and State,' gives us an excellent epitome of this epistle:

'St. Clement, after invoking the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity as witnesses of the judgment he was about to promulgate, declares that "he who performs without regretfulness the ordinances and commandments that are given by God" shall "be enrolled and have a name among the number of them that are saved through Jesus Christ. On the other hand, that those who are disobedient unto the words spoken by Him through us, will entangle themselves in no slight transgression and danger." He adds, moreover, "You will give us great joy and gladness if you render obedience to the things written by us through the Holy Spirit." From all which we learn that a decision of the Church of Rome, issued by its Bishop, as to whether the Bishop of Corinth was rightly or wrongly deposed, is declared after attestation of the Three Divine Persons to be among the commandments and ordinances given by God; to be "words spoken by God through us," that is, the Pope and the Church of Rome; to be "things written by us through the Holy Spirit," to which absolute obedience was due, and which could not be neglected "without no slight transgression and danger." The Pope, moreover, takes upon himself the power to deprive of the episcopate by issuing a judgment that an actual possessor of it is in his right, while he says at the same time that it would be "no light sin in us to deprive him of it unjustly."

'It is in every way remarkable that the first pastoral letter of a Pope which has been preserved to posterity should contain so undeniable an exercise of his supreme authority. Again, it is noteworthy that this supreme authority should

have been exercised in the lifetime of the last surviving Apostle, the Beloved Disciple.'[1]

The writings of the Apostolic Fathers[2] should be in the hands of every Catholic. When so many devotional works are brought out, as they are in the present day, some no doubt excellent, but others of a light, not to say trashy, description, it seems a pity Catholics should not seek their devotion and learning at the fountain-head—that is, from the early Saints, whose piety was as deep and enlightened as their lives were glorious. To conclude: we read for devotion—that is, to give food to our souls; and with a view to instructing ourselves and being of use to others. It has been said that we are giving (often without knowing it) life or death by our words, all day long. In this country, we are, practically, surrounded by non-believers, who are (some of them) honestly anxious to find out the grounds of our belief; whilst others (an equally numerous class) are on the look-out for any slips we make through ignorance or carelessness, in order to use them as weapons against our holy religion.

How few amongst us have really taken the trouble to study what may be called the Catholic question! To take one instance, how many could give an intelligent explanation of the saying—so often quoted—of 'No salvation outside the Church,' or are even aware that this saying, which is looked upon by Protestants as the *ne plus ultra* of Popish bigotry, dates from the earliest centuries of the Church, being found in the writings of St. Cyprian?[3]

[1] *Church and State*, p. 200.

[2] *The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers*, translated by Rev. Drs. Roberts, Donaldson, and Crombie (Clark, Edinburgh), contain, besides the epistle of St. Clement, the letters of St. Ignatius, bishop and martyr, and of St. Polycarp, martyr; also *The Shepherd* of Hermas, and many other works of the saints of the second and third centuries, all of the deepest interest and beauty.

[3] 'Extra Ecclesiam salus non est,' *Ep.* lxxiii.

If we compare the present state of things with the glorious records of the past, what a contrast we shall see! In the century and a half preceding the Reformation there seems, in this country, to have been a golden age of education and learning. The colleges and halls of Oxford were crowded (according to some computations) with nearly thirty thousand students. In the hundred years succeeding the number had shrunk to less than a third. The splendid library had been utterly destroyed by the too-great zeal of the Reforming party, even the bookcases having been cut up and made into firewood, so that when the great bequest was made by Bodley to Oxford nothing whatever, not even the bookshelves, was left of it.

No wonder Erasmus in his letters complains bitterly that all interest in science or history had ceased, the whole world having betaken itself to theological disputes. What cause it would be for regret if even in this country, where we are few in number, Catholics allowed the Church to be ousted from the position she has always held in the van of true progress and enlightenment!

ON GIVING AND TAKING SCANDAL

ANYONE who has chanced to come on to a lake among the hills, far from the haunts of men, will very frequently see wild-fowl collecting in its vicinity, some feeding peacefully on its shores, others with folded wings apparently sleeping on its bosom. And, perhaps, as he continues to watch, he sees in the distance other birds, attracted by the sight of the gleaming waters, preparing to make a descent upon them. They circle round and round, sometimes swooping so near its surface as almost to ruffle it with their wings. Then all of a sudden they appear to take fright at some sound or object seen to them alone, and collecting again they take flight into the far distance till they are visible but as a tiny speck in the sky. Little by little they return, again they circle round, and finally one after another they swoop down on to the water and settle peacefully upon it.

How often is it the same with regard to converts to the Church! They are attracted by the beauty of that 'Mighty Mother,' as Newman calls her. They envy the peace her children enjoy in her communion. They would fain partake of her faith. They even get so far as to begin to be instructed in her doctrines; and then just as it would seem as if they were on the point of being received into the Fold they take fright, and, like the wild-fowl we have been describing, they go straight away, sometimes never to return,

sometimes—grace triumphing—to come back to find that peace which is found nowhere out of her bosom.

In nine cases out of ten this sudden revolution has been caused by scandal and bad example. This point, therefore, of the giving or taking of scandal is such an important one in the history of all conversions, that it is worth while giving a little time to its consideration.

In the first place let us look into the grounds there are for taking scandal; and here we may as well start with the admission that anyone on the look-out for such an excuse will have no difficulty in finding one. The higher the ideal a man has of the Catholic Church, the more numerous the pitfalls he will find (unless put on his guard) in his pathway, and the greater will be his disillusionment; and in admitting this we are not abating one fraction of the boundless claim she has on our love and obedience, or in our admiration for her. What is the cause of this bitter disillusionment, which in some cases is so powerful as to frighten away souls on the point of making their submission to the Church, and prepared to believe all her doctrines?

The answer is a very simple one; it is the human element which exists in the Church and is inseparable from it. Jesus Christ took upon Himself the nature of man, and having founded His Church upon men, and not upon angels, sin and infirmity in some form or other must ever haunt her footsteps here below while her members are still on their trial, and far from their true home. The Church is ever holy. Never for a moment has she been misled into teaching false doctrine; never has she betrayed the sacred trust Christ confided to Peter to feed His lambs and to feed His sheep. Never has she ceased to urge on her children the maxims of the Gospel and the practice of perfection, or to administer the Sacraments instituted by her Divine Head. She is the Mother of Saints; and there never has been, nor ever will be, a time when she will cease from bearing

children eminent in sanctity, renowned in virtue and wisdom, to her Divine Spouse. The Church of Christ, therefore, has in a pre-eminent degree the mark of sanctity; but this quality is not the blessed heritage, by any means, of every member of her body. That such was to be the case we are warned by the words of Our Lord Himself. 'Scandals there must be,' He says, and 'woe to the world because of scandals.' In the primitive ages of the Church, if in any, we should have expected to find an almost universal reign of holiness and love. The first Christians were daily, almost hourly, in danger of losing their lives; at any moment a persecution might have broken out against them. They had the example in the Apostles of the greatest holiness the world has ever witnessed. They had the genius and inspiration of a St. Peter, a St. Paul, to preach to them; their lives—as we read of them in the Acts—were devoted to prayer and good works. Daily they communicated. Added to all this they were conscious, no doubt, of a holy mission; of being, as Jesus Christ Himself had said to them, 'the salt of the earth.' It was by means of their words, their prayers, their example that the conversion of the Pagan world was to be effected. Should we not, therefore, almost take for granted that at least in those days the Church was free from this imputation? If we turn to the epistles of St. Paul, we find that so far is this from being the case that scandals existed of the most glaring description, and were as common then as in these degenerate days.

These scandals may be summed up under three headings: disputes and contentions, heresies and schisms, and gross immoralities. Let us, therefore, for a moment transport ourselves in the spirit of those days—let us say, to the first century of the Christian Era. St. Paul has been preaching his wonderful discourses to the Achæans, or to the Romans, the Babylonians of Scripture. There are some among the audience who are not of the 'initiated;' they

come impelled by curiosity; they have heard of this wondrous eloquence, this stirring presence, that great soul in a little body, and they are there to criticize or to wonder, as it may be. They listen spell-bound. It is a revelation to them indeed. Never have they heard such glorious truths enunciated by mortal lips, never imagined such pure and holy doctrine. Looking back on their past lives, they shrink abashed from what they see there. It is as if a mirror were held up to them, in which they can see their own base selves reflected. How can they face death, and that awful hereafter of which the great Preacher spoke, till they have made their peace with the Deity; till their souls have been washed in those cleansing waters of baptism, unheard of till now, but which are henceforth to be the object of all their longing desire?

These are but a faint reflection of the thoughts and impressions which must have been caused by the preaching of the Apostles on the heathen world, to which the message of the Gospel of Christ must have appeared (as it truly was) a streak of heavenly light, in the surrounding darkness of ignorance and sin. Let us imagine these men, now fully awake to the misery and sinfulness of their former lives, presenting themselves to the Apostles, or deacons of the Church, to implore that they may be numbered among the catechumens—or, as we should say now, put under instruction—and eventually received into the fold of Christ. To gain this precious favour they are willing to risk anything, nay, to lose all, and count it as dung, as St. Paul says, in order to gain Christ. They are aware of what they will have to face: confiscation of worldly goods; loss of honour, position, possibly life itself. All this they are prepared for. They are not taken into the Church whilst in their first fervour; they are given time to 'count the cost.' They are slowly and diligently prepared by a course of instruction—verbal, no doubt, as at the time we speak of only two of the

four Gospels had been written, and the Sacred Scriptures were not put in the hands of the profane. They have to prove themselves first, lest there should be danger of having cast the pearls of the Word of God before swine. For the same reason they are only allowed to assist at the catechumens' Mass, as it was called. That is, they are sent away after the Gospel is read and before the consecration, at which only the initiated are allowed to assist. During this long probation we may conclude that they have every opportunity given them of becoming acquainted with the lives and habits of their fellow-Christians—for Christians they are in desire, if not yet in actual fact. And here it is that their faith was tried, we may venture to assert, more severely than by any of the mysteries of the Christian religion which were proposed for their belief.

Human nature is the same in all times and all countries, and the faith which receives a fatal shock from the shortcomings or divisions among the clergy and laity of the present day must have suffered an equally severe one when tried by a knowledge of the contentions and sects [1] which sprang up with mushroom-like rapidity even so early as in the days of the Apostles; or when scandals such as St. Paul speaks of as being 'absolutely heard among you,' as 'the like is not among the heathens,' were read, in order to be publicly reprehended, in his first epistle to the Church of Corinth.

This trial, therefore, of scandal is no new one; as it must have been to the catechumens of the first century of the Church's existence, so it is now to the convert who seeks the

[1] *E.g.* the Docetæ originated in apostolic times. See the allusion made to them in the first epistle of St. John, ch. iv. 2. Also St. Paul's warning (2 Tim. ch. ii. 16): 'of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus; who have erred from the truth, saying that the resurrection is past already, and have subverted the faith of some.' St. John's Gospel vindicated the Divinity of Christ against the errors of Ebion.

shelter of her fold in the twentieth century. The just man lives by faith, not by sight; and as his faith will be tried by being required to believe mysteries such as that of the Blessed Trinity, or the virginal birth of our Divine Saviour, so it will be put to the test by the weakness and fallibility of many of the feeble instruments which yet God makes use of in carrying out His mighty designs for man. And this principle, which causes us some surprise when applied to heavenly things, is one, singular to relate, which we take as a matter of course when applied to the doings of everyday life. We talk of having implicit faith in So-and-so; we believe in him in spite of having heard stories to his disadvantage, and we should consider we showed a want of true friendship for him if we did not continue trusting him in spite of appearances, which on some points are against him.

Shall we not, then, show the same faith and confidence in our great and merciful God, and in the Church founded by Him, which has His sacred promise that He will abide with it for ever?

Besides individual or class shortcomings, there are other subjects connected with the Catholic Church which we know, by experience or hearsay, to be a severe trial to those not of the faith. One of the greatest of these is the familiarity which Catholics constantly display towards some of the most solemn mysteries of their holy religion: a familiarity—almost indifference—so great that it would almost appear to the non-Catholic that they set practically next to no value upon them. This want of reverence, they would probably allege, is even shown towards the adorable Sacrament of the Altar.

An instance of this would be given of a man who goes abroad and sees the Mass said as it sometimes is in France or Italy. He has hardly time to follow the service in his prayer-book, and naturally concludes that the priest is

hurrying over it without any sense of the solemnity of that august rite. Or he goes to a Catholic country-house, where there is a private chapel, and he is told that the Blessed Sacrament is reserved there, and curiosity, or perhaps devotion, takes him into that hidden Presence; and he is shocked to find that for the greater part of the day Jesus is left alone in the tabernacle, though all in the house profess to believe in that sacred mystery.

How can this be? We can best answer this question by quoting a well-known incident in a controversy which took place in the sixteenth century between Blessed John Fisher and Œcolampadius the reformer. One of the arguments brought forward by the latter against Transubstantiation (in which he had ceased to believe, if indeed he had ever done so) was that the great bulk of the Christian world showed their want of living faith in that doctrine by their indifference to the Divine Presence on their altars. If, he urged, Catholics really believed that Christ is as truly present in the tabernacle as He was in the crib of Bethlehem, the churches would ever be thronged, the whole world would flock to His feet and lie prostrate before Him, and people would show by their very behaviour in church that they were conscious of standing in the presence of their Judge. To this Blessed John Fisher answered more or less as follows: 'It is quite true that such conduct might be expected from the true believer. On the other hand, from the knowledge of human nature that we all possess, it is not difficult to realise that great truths that are ever before men lose a part of their effect upon them. You declare that you are astonished at the indifference of men with regard to a doctrine you do not hold, but the same indifference causes you no astonishment with regard to another in which you do believe, and that is God's presence in His own creation. How is it that you suffer yourself to be drawn from adoration? Why are you (and all men) not day and night on

your knees, and not only morning and evening, since the Blessed Trinity seeks to be adored in spirit and in truth in every place? We go about our business, and forget Him, and yet this is from no want of faith; and it is the same with regard to belief in the mystery of Transubstantiation.'

Familiarity, in other words, dulls the edge of devotion; and there are many Catholics who have sufficient faith in their hearts to go to the stake, were it necessary, in defence of their holy religion, who yet in everyday life, when no special call is made on their zeal and piety, are a cause of scandal to the non-Catholic (and equally to the newly-received Catholic), who cannot understand how faith in these mysteries can be combined with an outward appearance of indifference to them.

Probably no one appeals more tenderly to a man's heart than his mother. But the more we see of her the less special attention we pay to her; when we live under the same roof we meet her but with a nod or a passing salutation. It is only in moments of overpowering anguish or joy that we pour out our feelings on her bosom.

All this is truism; but of many things it may be said that before they are stated they are difficulties, afterwards they are truisms.

The absence of conspicuous marks of love or appreciation for the privileges which belong to their religion among Catholics is therefore a common cause of scandal to those who are about to join it, or have newly done so. Another is their want of reverence for holy things. It is a commonplace of the ordinary British book of travels that it is impossible to travel in purely Catholic countries, such as Spain or Italy, without the eye and the ear being constantly shocked by a familiarity with sacred subjects which amounts, in the writer's estimation, to gross irreverence. The instances given, with most of which by constant repeti-

tion we are thoroughly familiar, may be roughly classed as follows:

One set may be described as being misunderstandings pure and simple; nothing more than an explanation is required to dispose of them. A second is accounted for by the distinction, which would be admitted on all hands without further controversy, between the Northern and Southern temperament; for there can be no question but that a racial difference exists between the Latin and Gothic races on the subject of reverence, and that we of the Gothic and Saxon race take our religion, as we do our pleasures, more seriously than do our Latin fellow-Christians. The third, and perhaps most important of all, is the fundamental difference, in active operation from the earliest childhood, between Catholics and Protestants in their method of viewing and treating sacred subjects. On this point we shall have a good deal to say; but first it would be as well to explain what we mean by misunderstandings.

A member of the Anglican Church, or of any other Protestant persuasion, goes abroad; he travels to amuse himself, or to study art, or for one of a thousand similar objects. If he is interested in religious matters, he attends the ceremonies of the Catholic Church and looks out for any manifestation of a national or individual character on those subjects, his very bringing up as a Protestant urging him to exercise his right of private judgment on all matters he comes across. As he would instinctively say, he wishes to judge for himself. The result is that such a one would never dream of asking an explanation, mentioning his doubts, still less asking advice or opinion of anything he saw from a Catholic priest, or probably from anyone who was likely to give him trustworthy information. It would be too much like asking for an *ex parte* statement. On art or antiquity—if an intelligent worker or sightseer—he is only too glad to get an expert to help him, especially if it is

a subject on which he is conscious of his own ignorance; but on religion, no.

What is the consequence? That he is shocked and scandalized at every turn. He goes, for instance, if he is in Rome, to see the ceremonies at St. Peter's, where he is witness of the usual procession of Pope and cardinals. It is a splendid sight, he has no difficulty in admitting that, but never was there anything less like—or so he thinks—a religious service. The monsignori and prelates talk and nod to each other; one takes snuff, another stops to chat. They seem hardly to realise the sanctity of the building they are in. And his thoughts recur to some great ceremony of thanksgiving or inauguration which he remembers witnessing at St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. There, at least, he thinks, was true reverence. It might not be so gorgeous in colour and surroundings, but at least the actors in it were conscious of the solemnity of the occasion and the dignity of the scene. Now that there is a particle of truth in the above, namely that the Anglo-Saxon mind and character lends itself more to reverence than the Latin, we readily admit; but if our friend had troubled to take the nearest Catholic (priest or layman) into his confidence he would have gone away with a much fairer view of the situation. In the first place he would have understood that the good monsignori whose demeanour he had been so interested in looked upon the performance as a kind of gala day, a royal —or papal—ceremonial, and hardly as a religious ceremony at all. They had each one (or with so few exceptions they are hardly worth mentioning) said his Mass, probably made his meditation, and recited the greater part of the divine office (Italian ecclesiastics being very early in their habits); accordingly, a procession in St. Peter's would be as much of a relaxation as any that he had time for in the day.

Another cause for the absence of conspicuous reverence in a church is one that would not naturally occur to a non-

Catholic without explanation. With him no special presence on the altar distinguishes one part of the church from another; all is equally sacred. It is not so with a Catholic. The Blessed Sacrament altar or side-chapel, as it is in St. Peter's and in all large churches, is given up to the reception of the Divine Guest. Let him go there and mix with the kneeling crowd, the ever-renewed group of loving worshippers. *There* he will have no cause for complaint of the want of reverence in Catholic churches.

In the great cathedrals of Spain, such as Seville, Toledo, and others, it is customary to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in a building entirely apart, and under a separate roof (called sometimes the parish church); this no doubt has given rise constantly to misapprehensions such as we have alluded to. A Protestant enters, sees nothing but a few tourists lounging about guide-book in hand, or possibly some peasant women kneeling before the picture of a favourite saint, or even market-women, basket in hand, sheltering from the mid-day sun, and is quite unconscious that within a stone's throw of the great cathedral, but divided from it, is the little Church of the Blessed Sacrament where Mass is being said from early dawn till twelve o'clock, and which is constantly crowded by the devout of both sexes. If we were to go into all the causes of scandal in a non-Catholic mind, as demonstrated even in the current literature of the day—most, if not all, of which could be removed by the simple means of asking information of any well-informed Catholic—this chapter would extend to the length of a book. We will therefore pass on to the consideration of the third subject of scandal, which results from Protestants being brought up to look upon matters of religion from an entirely different point of view from that adopted by Catholics.

We think we could not do better than to quote a short passage from an excellent little work called 'Mothers and Sons,' which puts the matter of instilling reverence into

children from the Protestant point of view in a most telling manner. 'As to prayer this only will I say, that it is quite impossible to be too careful about reverence. . . . Sunday observance should be the natural outcome of the religious training. . . . I would suggest that in early years, before church-going begins, there should be cessation from toys and other week-day diversions during the time the parents are in church. . . . Another difficult question is that of church-going. In early years children enjoy accompanying their elders to church. Let the privilege, therefore, be restricted so as not to become cheap,'[1] and so on. A good deal, no doubt, might be said in favour of the above view; but whatever it *is*, one thing it certainly is *not*, and that is the Catholic view or theory. To put the whole matter in a nutshell, Protestants start with the outward form—reverence in speaking and manner (*e.g.* putting away toys on Sunday and so forth), and trust to the outward observance working inwardly and producing, in the minds of children, faith and other virtues due to the great truths of religion.

Catholics (whether rightly or wrongly) habitually do the reverse. They expect nothing from a child's outward behaviour till such time as he has reached the age to be instructed in the tenets of his faith, and then trust to these sacred truths to work outwardly, producing in him reverence and other fruits of religion. As to the question which is the better of the two methods we are not at present concerned; it is with the result, as visible to the eye of a public ever ready to criticize the Catholic system, that we have to do.

It is incontestable that what is instilled into man in his childhood goes deeper and clings to him longer than anything he learns in after life. Who can deny, therefore, that the forms of reverence, the hushed tones, the lowered voice, with which Protestants habitually talk of God and religious

[1] *Mothers and Sons*, by Hon and Rev. E. Lyttelton, pp. 40, 44, 45.

matters, maintain their power long after the inward conviction, the soul in a word, has departed? The Catholic, on the other hand, never having been taught to see any special merit in an appearance of reverence or piety apart from his own feelings on the subject, should he lose his faith, parts also with the outward form, and is at once a scandal to a Protestant, though little more of an unbeliever than he is.

We have said that a Catholic mother trusts to the great truths of religion to give a child a sense of reverence for holy things, but she does not wait till he has arrived at ripe years, or attained the use of reason, to instil habits of piety into him. She takes her child, while still an infant in arms, into the Divine Presence, believing that as whilst Christ lived upon earth 'grace was ever going out of Him and healing all,' it is no less so now that He abides with man under the Eucharistic veil in the tabernacle. As the child grows older he still accompanies her as much as is possible or convenient. He plays by her side, or she gives him pictures from her prayer-book to look at, while she prays. A Catholic congregation sees nothing in this familiar sight to cause surprise, much less disedification. The idea is congenial to all that children should be made to feel at home in the church, whose Master had said: 'Suffer little children to come to Me, and forbid them not.'

To the Catholic—especially to the Catholic poor in foreign countries—the church is his home. It is his Father's House. He may be tempted to take liberties with both, but how often are they the liberties of children too sure of their Father's love to be afraid of His frown! How long it takes a convert to realise this simple fact we leave it to them to say; and for those outside the Church, how can we expect them to see it in this light who have *no wish* to understand, looking on as aliens, and shocked at the familiarities of the children of the House?

Once more. Let us transport ourselves in spirit to Palestine, putting back the clock nearly two thousand years, and let us follow our Lord in His peaceful progress through the villages of Galilee and Samaria. What do we see there? He is speaking to His disciples, and as He walks through the quiet sleepy villages a little knot collects around Him. Some who are believers in His doctrines, who have heard of His wonderful miracles, are listening to Him; others watch Him at a distance from the doorstep of their houses; little children gather at His feet. Here and there one more fervent than another kneels before Him for His blessing and worships Him. He passes on and they return to their daily work.

It is thus with the Catholic born and bred, living in a Catholic atmosphere in a Catholic country. He puts on no air of reverence, but none the less faith teaches him that Christ is present in his churches; he knows where to find Him, often though he neglects to look for Him there, and in the great events of life, in trials, in suffering, above all in death, he has recourse to Him and dies comforted by Him.

Nor is it otherwise with children in a Catholic country. As they grow older possibly they may be more deficient in the forms of reverence familiar to the Protestant mind—the absence of which has afforded matter for such grievous accusation—can we doubt, however, that God, looking at the heart, cares little for the empty form, and if He sees less so-called reverence, He sees more honest love!

From the disillusionment produced by scandals inside the Church to the inquirer, or newly converted, we have wandered to the general subject of stumbling-blocks which ignorance of Catholic feelings and Catholic habits places in the path of the Protestant. Let us return, therefore (to use once more the illustration we began with), from the wild-fowl still soaring in the clouds, to those which have sunk to rest on the bosom of the lake.

So far we have spoken of scandal in its most obvious sense only: that is, in the sense of disedification. Before concluding we should like to say a few words about scandal in the sense of difficulty and hindrance in the path of religion.

A Catholic newly received into the Church has generally some difficulties to contend with as regards the acceptation of doctrines or devotions held by the Church and put forward by her for his belief. The more he has thought out these matters, the more highly educated he is, the more inclined to test things by his reason—in fact, the more intellectually gifted he is—the greater will be his difficulty in submitting to her decisions.

If we have any doubts as to whether this must needs be the case, or whether it has not always been so from the beginning, we have but to turn to the pages of the New Testament and learn a lesson from the first worshippers.

The Angels of God were sent to tell the humble and ignorant shepherds that 'a Saviour was born to them,' and without hesitating for a moment they went with haste to Bethlehem, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger; and 'seeing they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning the child.' The Magi are called too—that is the learned, the mighty, the rich—but it is from a great distance. With infinite labour they find themselves at His feet. A star only was sent to them, and it shone only in their own Eastern country, and they had to inquire where He was to be found, but at last it 'stood over where the Child was, and they rejoiced with exceeding great joy' (Matt. ii. 10).

It was the same when our Lord began His public mission. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, for he feared to compromise himself, and Jesus spoke to him in parables, and used words of deep and mystic signification, and the Gospel narrative leaves us in doubt as to the result. 'And from

Judea,' it goes on to relate, 'Christ passed into Galilee to a city in Samaria,' and a poor woman comes from the city to draw water from the well where Jesus was sitting and resting. For *her* He uses the simplest illustration—the one which would appeal to her most. The water which she was accustomed to draw with difficulty He compares to the water which He will give, and which He tells her will become to those who believe in Him a fountain of water springing up unto life everlasting; and then He goes on to tell her about her past life, and at once she acknowledges that He is a prophet; and when the people flocked out of the city to hear Him, she gives testimony: "He told me all things whatsoever I have done". . . . and many more believed in Him' (John iv. 39).

On another occasion He breaks out into an ecstasy that these things should be so, and praises and thanks His Father for it: 'I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones' (Matt. xi. 25).

And then, once more, for fear that there should be any lingering belief in the minds of any of His followers that learning, or worldly wisdom, or any of this world's advantages could avail them in the new path which He—the Son of God—had come down from heaven to point out, He says: 'Unless you receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, you shall not enter into it.'

Here at least there can be no question about the significance of our Lord's words. A child receives his knowledge from his mother's lips, as he receives all else at her hands. His parents' authority is one from which he makes no appeal, because he knows no other.

All this may be quite true, it will be urged, but reason is given us to be made use of. We are to present a 'reasonable service' to the Almighty, the Scriptures tell us, and the Catholic Church (though, no doubt, right enough on main

points) goes too far for our taste. How common it is to hear a speech of this sort in the mouths of converts. And, alas! it is a breach that does not end there; it is for ever widening: 'the little rift within the lute.' As years go on the difference will become, in all likelihood, more marked, the want of harmony greater, and the would-be Catholic either leads an unhappy life in the Church, or drifts back into the Communion he had previously abandoned. The secret of such disasters is not far to seek. There was no real submission of the heart to a divinely-appointed authority. Such converts have come into the Church because their opinions on various doctrines coincided with hers. When they have discovered —as they were certain to do before long—that they differed on other points, the same exercise of their private judgment takes them out of it, leaving them in worse plight than they were in before.

The Church of God is our mother; and in that capacity she proposes many doctrines for our acceptance. As she is one Body with Christ, she cannot err. Unless we are at peace in her bosom we shall never know peace elsewhere this side of the grave. And to enjoy this blessed peace we must think and feel with her: *sentire cum Ecclesia*, as theologians put it. But we are human, and some of her practices—her devotions to the saints, for instance, or to the Blessed Virgin—are very difficult to appreciate, much more to embrace with a whole heart. Is not this a plea we often hear? The difference in the view Protestants and Catholics take on the subject of the Blessed Virgin may be stated broadly as follows: Protestants see in the words addressed by our Blessed Lord to His Mother a series of remarks of a more or less derogatory description (the 'more or less' depending on the school of religious thought to which they belong). Catholics learn from these same remarks certain lessons, bearing not at all on our Lady's position, but upon truths which it was expedient for our Saviour, in His divine

wisdom, to declare to the Jewish people to whom He was sent.

If we examine in this light the texts in the Scriptures which have reference to the Blessed Virgin, we shall see how completely they bear out this contention. Let us take one passage from the Gospels which is continually quoted in support of the non-Catholic view: 'And it came to pass, as He spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said to Him: Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breasts that gave Thee suck. But He said: Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.' (Luke xi. 27, 28.)

To a Catholic these words convey a great lesson, as no doubt they did likewise to the Jews. To hearken to the voice of God, to respond to His Divine grace, this is indeed the highest calling and vocation. If for one moment the idea could be entertained that any human being had reached a higher proficiency in this respect than Mary, her pre-eminence might be questioned. Has an angel straight from the presence of God saluted any as yet, save Mary, with those words: 'Hail, full of grace;' and again: 'Thou hast found grace with God?' Could anyone say with Mary in the words of Holy Writ: 'By me, His handmaid, He hath fulfilled His mercy which He promised to the house of Israel?' Or again: 'He that made me rested in my tabernacle?' Mary's position in the economy of God's Providence is absolutely unrivalled. As the Church cries out in her office, she gave birth to Him who made her, and to all eternity remains a virgin.

Our faith in the Blessed Virgin is also a touchstone in all questions which affect her Son's adorable human nature. Her title of Mother of God (given her at the Council of Ephesus) protects the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus Christ; and though, no doubt, devotions to her of a special kind have been subject to that development which is a

leading feature of Holy Church, yet we find an expression of them on the part of St. Irenæus,[1] St. Justin, Origen, and others in the earliest centuries of her existence. 'Evil, no doubt, would this devotion be, if it diminished or obscured ever so little that supreme devotion to God, who is over all, and to Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. But one who dared to put Mary on an equality with God, or to deny that Christ is the one Mediator between God and man—*i.e.* the sole Author of our Redemption, the Beginner and the Finisher of our Faith—would by that very fact cease to be a Catholic.'[2] In spite, however, of the grace of faith, and even the logic of facts, there may be points of doctrine and practice in the Catholic Church which continue to be a stumbling-block to those received into her fold. To such as these it may be of service to put before them the words of a distinguished convert, lately dead, who gives (in his own person) the example of how difficulties of this sort should be treated, and overcome.

Speaking of his conversion, Coventry Patmore says: 'It was not until the autumn of the year 1877 that my faith became the controlling power which for five-and-thirty years I had longed and prayed to find it. In the spring of that year I set myself to reconsider the possible causes of my shortcoming. It occurred to me that I might have too lightly availed myself of the dispensations from fasting obtained on account of my weak digestion. I accordingly kept the fast of that year fully, though, not being able to eat eggs or fish, I had to keep the fast on vegetables, and, at Easter's approach, was, as the doctor told me, on the verge of a serious illness. Easter, however, brought neither the illness I feared, nor the fulness of health I hoped for. In what had I been failing that I had as yet failed of obtaining the whole promise of supernatural grace?

[1] See Newman's *Development*, on the testimony of the Fathers to the devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

[2] *Cath. Dict.* p. 604.

'Before and ever since my reception into the Church my feelings had been, as it seemed to me, hopelessly out of harmony with the feelings of the best Catholics with regard to the Blessed Virgin. I was in the habit, indeed, of addressing her in prayer, and believed that I had often found such prayers to be successful beyond others; but I could not abide the Rosary, and was chilled and revolted at what seemed to me the excess of many forms of devotion to her. Good, I hoped, might come of some practical contradiction of this repugnance, some confession in act and will of what my feelings thus refused to accept. I therefore resolved to do the very last thing in the world which my natural inclination would have suggested. I resolved to make an external profession of my acceptance of the Church's mind by a pilgrimage to Lourdes. This I undertook without any sensible devotion, and merely in the temper of a business man who does not leave any stone unturned when a great issue is at stake, though the prospect of attaining thereby what he seeks may seem exceedingly small. Accordingly, on the 14th of October, 1877, I knelt at the shrine by the river Gave, and rose without any emotion or enthusiasm, or unusual sense of devotion, but with a tranquil sense that the prayers of thirty-five years had been granted. I paid two visits of thanksgiving to Lourdes in the two succeeding Octobers for the gift which was then received, and which has never since been for a single hour withdrawn.' [1]

Comment here seems needless, as we see by a practical illustration the means God would have us use in order to gain the grace of a perfect 'joy and peace in believing.'

We have dwelt at greater length on the causes of taking scandal, and especially of taking what is called Pharisaical scandal, than upon giving it, for an obvious reason; and that is because of all characteristics it is the one most opposed to the spirit of Jesus Christ, and therefore the greatest obstacle

[1] *Memoirs of Coventry Patmore*, ii. 55–6.

to finding Him in His Church. Much also could be said on the subject of giving scandal.

Every sincere son of the Church and follower of our Divine Saviour has, by his profession of faith, his baptismal vows, and by his very name of Catholic, taken upon himself certain solemn obligations. What our Lord said to His first disciples He says still to us: 'You are the salt of the earth. If the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? And again: 'So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.' We can only fulfil this precept by living up to the maxims of the Gospel and avoiding what we know to be an occasion of scandal to the weak. 'Take heed,' St. Paul warns us, 'lest perhaps this your liberty become a stumbling-block to the weak. . . . . Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?' (1 Cor. viii. 9, 11).

There are many occasions when carelessness or indifference to the example we give may lose souls to God and His Church. Members of other denominations, as we all know, are ever on the watch to see how Catholics behave with regard not only to the commands of their Church, but on other matters which, to the non-Catholic, are crucial tests of their sincerity. When, therefore, we fail in acting up to the standard of our own professions, even though it may be in cases when we have a right to plead the Church's indulgence, we must remember that we do it at the risk of putting stumbling-blocks in the way of our brother. More especially is this the case with regard to dissension within the Church. Unity is the distinguishing badge of the Catholic Church; every member of it, therefore, who incurs this reproach is laying himself thereby open to hearing Christ's sentence applied to him: 'See that you despise not one of these little ones;' and 'he that shall scandalise one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a

millstone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea.' (Matt. xviii. 6.) The little ones of Christ, that is the ignorant, the young, the imperfectly instructed, have a right to discover this distinguishing mark of Christ's Church. If *to them* it is obscured through the folly or pride of what St. Paul calls 'their brother,' what will be his penalty in the sight of God who says He is 'a patient Rewarder?'

ON THE CULTIVATION OF CATHOLIC INSTINCTS

IN NECESSARIIS UNITAS, IN DUBIIS LIBERTAS, IN OMNIBUS CARITAS

PROBABLY one of the first instincts of a convert newly admitted into the Church will be to visit some Catholic country. Rome, possibly, will be the goal of his desires, or France, or Spain, or in short some country in which he can, as it were, steep his mind in Catholic feeling and tradition. And this instinct is a wise one which he should by all means encourage. It is true that, the Anglo-Saxon race being essentially a religious and law-abiding one, the Catholics of England probably are in no sense behind their brethren on the Continent, or in other parts of the world, in their obedience to the Church and in their outward practices of piety. But it is impossible to deny that, living, as Catholics do in this country, in an essentially Protestant atmosphere, some of the most beautiful characteristics of our holy faith which are so touchingly exemplified in Catholic countries are entirely, or almost entirely, wanting.

Three hundred years of oppression are not to be wiped out in a day, and the shadow of the penal laws lies on us still.

Chief among these characteristics is the continual introduction of religious thought and devotion into the everyday affairs of life. Look, for instance, at the Tyrol, or the

Catholic cantons of Switzerland, where the Stations of the Cross are constantly seen placed at intervals along the side of the road, so that the passer-by as he pursues his way going out to the day's work, or returning in the evening the day's duty accomplished, can unite his prayer and his intention to the sufferings and Passion of his Redeemer endured for love of him. Look again in Spain, Italy, or Belgium at the constant evidence of devotion to our Lord, His Blessed Mother or the saints, which shows itself on every side, whether we are on the look-out for it or not. The crucifix by the wayside (so common especially in the Rhine Provinces and in Spain), the little oratory, decked with flowers carefully tended, containing the picture or statue of our Lady, which we see especially in Italy, and a little lamp probably burning before it on her festivals. Again, look how religion enters into every part of the daily life of the Catholic peasant abroad. He is awakened in the morning by the sound of the *Angelus* bell, or, if he is in Belgium, by a hundred carillons chiming from the clock-tower of church or convent, and announcing that the service of God and the day's work is begun. And at the same moment how many servants of God, men and women, have begun that song of praise and thanksgiving—the Divine office—in which, in obedience to his Maker, seven times a day man does homage to his God!

Cardinal Wiseman, writing to a friend, quotes with approval a remark made to him, that our devotion to the saints resembled the representations of them on stained-glass windows in our churches: from without they are meaningless, their beauty only showing itself to those who see them from within. How truly this describes the situation as between the Protestant and the Catholic! It is the picture seen from the inside that we must get into our heads, and no less firmly get rid of the other, if we are ever to be Catholics in aught but in name; and the best means

of doing this is by studying Catholicity at its fountain-head. Probably one of the things that have shocked us most whilst outside the Church is the devotion so openly displayed by Catholics to the Blessed Virgin and saints, the decoration of altars erected in their honour, the pilgrimages to their shrines; in short, the extent to which this cult, as we imagined, is suffered or encouraged by the Church to absorb the mind of her children to the exclusion of the worship and service of God.

This attitude, like many others, adopted by non-Catholics towards devotions with which they have no practical acquaintance, is founded, as Newman justly remarks, on *a priori* grounds: that is, on what we think *ought to be* the result of such practices, and not on what actually *is* the result. An acquaintance with the inner working of the lives of Catholics, whether of the higher or lower classes, will soon bring to light the fact that the same piety which is prompt in its attendance at the *Mois de Marie* is equally so at Mass on Sundays, and that a love of Mary is generally accompanied by an effort to cultivate the virtue of purity and sanctity of life of which the Blessed Mother was so admirable an example. But the convert who has accepted the great truth that in becoming Catholic he has submitted to an authority with a right to teach derived from Christ Himself, a living Voice which can never err, will be prepared to accept these devotions on her word and recommendation even before he has tested their value to his own satisfaction; and he will soon realise how consonant her teaching is with the words of Scripture, and with the practice of Christianity from the earliest ages.

Before we enter into the question of the cult of the angels and saints, it would be as well to consider the subject from the wider point of view, *e.g.* that of the position occupied by the ministering spirits, and great servants of God, in the economy of God's dealings with man.

From the Scriptures we see that from the beginning God made use of His angels as intermediaries between Himself and man. He sent one to Balaam to stand in his way with a drawn sword when he was preparing to disobey His commands, and another to Joshua, who, as we are told, 'fell on his face to the ground and worshipping said, "What saith my Lord to His servant?"' (Jos. v. 15.)

The angels, again, have offices assigned to them in their dealings with man. They punish the enemies of God with a sword. They protect men from danger: 'The angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear Him, and shall deliver them' (Ps. xxxiii. 8); and once more: 'He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways' (Ps. xc. 11). They are given as guardians to the sons of men, according to our Lord's promise: 'See that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven' (Matt. xviii. 10). Or they take charge of souls on their departure hence: 'It came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom' (Luke xvi. 23). They are spoken of thus in St. Paul's epistle to the Hebrews: 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?' (Heb. i. 14.)

If God makes use of His angels, sending them on missions of vengeance or compassion, no less does He allow man to interfere and plead in his own cause or that of his fellow-man. Abraham pleaded the cause of the condemned cities; and God suffered the designs of His Providence to be overruled in the punishment of the stiff-necked and rebellious Israelites at the prayer of His servant Moses.

But the patriarchs and prophets of old—mighty men and great servants of God as they undoubtedly were—groaned under the sin of Adam. It was not till Christ had shed His Blood for man, and thus opened the kingdom of God to

believers, that man was admitted to the full plenitude of his privileges. It is in the New Testament that we read of the angels offering to God 'vials of odours, which are the prayers of saints' (Apoc. v. 8).

To realise the position of the saints in the designs of God's Providence we should study the life of our Divine Saviour. We see in it how wonderfully Jesus Christ identified Himself from the first with His disciples and followers as fellow-workers in the great scheme of the redemption of man. He gave them the same powers that He Himself possessed, and promised them even greater ones. His promise to them was: 'He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent me;' and of the cities that refused to receive them He prophesied: 'I say to you it shall be more tolerable at that day for Sodom than for that city.'

No wonder the Psalmist exclaims: 'To me Thy friends are made exceedingly honourable.'

Again, great light is thrown on God's dealings with His saints in the writings of St. Paul, both in his profound teaching on the subject of the union between the different members of the mystical Body of Christ (the foundation of all the honours the Church pays to the saints) and in his account of the favours he personally received from God. 'With Christ,' he tells us, 'I am nailed to the cross, and I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii. 20). In another place he says: 'Henceforth let no man be troublesome to me, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body' (Gal. vi. 17).

But if the Church sees in the angels and saints of God creatures and children of His, and therefore honours them to the utmost of her power, she sees all this and more in the person of the ever-blessed Mother of God. In Mary she hails the second Eve, by whose obedience to the divine Will the punishment of the first Eve was revoked. She

never wearies in the offices of the Blessed Virgin, and on her feasts in saluting her in those beautiful mystical titles by which the prophets and patriarchs of old prophesied the great part she was to take in the redemption of mankind. She sees in Mary the first-fruits of the plentiful redemption of the Son of God, conceived without stain of original sin through the merits of her Divine Son. The two ever-astounding miracles of Christianity, a fruitful Virginity and an Incarnate God, are safeguarded by the love and devotion of the faithful to the Virgin Mother of God. The homage, therefore, that the Church pays to the angels and saints of God, and above all to His ever-blessed Mother, is based on the great truths of religion; on the fact that they are very dear to Him, and endowed by Him with very special favours, so that in honouring them we are honouring Him, and securing their powerful advocacy at the throne of the Most High.

This homage and veneration which the Church gives to the saints began in the very earliest days of Christianity, and extended to their relics: that is, fragments of their bones, the blood shed by martyrs, and even to the garments worn by them. This we see in the Acts of the Apostles (xix. 12) when: 'God wrought by the hand of Paul more than common miracles. So that even there were brought from his body to the sick handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them.' 'There is a power,' says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, 'latent even in the bodies of the just.' The early Christians gathered the bones of St. Ignatius of Antioch (A.D. 107) and placed them in linen 'as a priceless treasure, being left to the holy Church by the grace which was in the martyr.'[1]

In a previous chapter we have drawn attention to the recent discoveries made in the Catacombs which ratify the doctrine of the Church on many points in the most unmis-

[1] *Act. Mart.* 6; *Cath. Dict.* p. 783.

takable manner, and prove the identity of her present teaching with that during the earliest centuries of her existence; in none is this more strikingly exemplified than with regard to devotion to the saints. 'The dogmas and practices' (says Paul Allard) 'in which the Reformers of the sixteenth century imagined that they found novelty and innovation, such as the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the real presence of the Saviour in the Eucharist, the Primacy of Peter, the invocation of the Saints, especially of the Blessed Virgin, and finally that admirable exchange of the relations between the living and the dead, all this is as clearly taught in the Catacombs as it is in the Catechism: consequently it is as old as the Church itself, flowing directly from the teaching of the Apostles, nay, even, from that of Jesus Christ.[1] The teaching of the Church of Christ is ever the same: it may develop, but it can never change. We see an instance of this development in the use of statues and pictures of the saints; the risk of idolatry in the early centuries (as great at that time as when God issued His commands on Mount Horeb, proscribing the use of graven images), a risk which necessitated great caution, has in a great measure ceased to exist. 'Further, God Himself has taken a human form which admits of being represented by art. So that the reasoning of Moses in Deut. iv. 5 no longer holds, and on the whole matter the liberty of Christians is very different from the bondage of the Jews.'[2] Notwithstanding this wise caution, however, statues and pictures of the saints, the Blessed Virgin, and Christ Himself were undoubtedly used for devotional purposes, and still exist in the Catacombs and on the Sarcophagi at Saragossa, dating from the second and third centuries; and raised figures on the sacred vessels are mentioned by Tertullian 150 years after Christ.

It has been wisely said that the statues and representations of Jesus Christ and His saints are the books of the

[1] *Christianity or Agnosticism?* p. 465. [2] *Cath. Dict.* p. 469.

poor. We must never forget that pregnant saying of our Divine Saviour's, when giving proof of His Divine mission, 'The poor have the Gospel preached to them.' To instruct the poor in the words and example of Jesus Christ has ever been the first care of the Catholic Church; and how can this be better accomplished than by putting before them the representation of Christ crucified, or of His Virgin Mother, in whom they behold a model of that holiness without which it is impossible to please God? And in a minor degree this is the same with regard to pictures or statues of all the saints and martyrs.

Till we reach the eternal shore we shall never grasp the true and far-reaching significance of the profession of faith we daily make: 'I believe in the Communion of Saints.' But we may gain some perception of it from the teaching of the Scriptures; for instance, in those words of St. Paul: 'I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His Body, which is the Church' (Col. i. 24). To suppose that the Apostle intended by these words that anything was wanting to the perfect satisfaction that Christ, the one Mediator, makes for our sins, would indeed be to misapprehend his meaning. But Christ in ascending to His Father left His work, in a very real and practical sense, to His children to complete, and thus each one of us, daily, can make up what is wanting to His Body the Church; and more especially is this the work of the saints. Thus St. Paul says: 'Be followers of me'—not that he wished to institute any comparison between himself and the infinitely higher example and teaching of Christ, who, as he says in the next sentence, is our model, but because in following his example, that is of the Church of which he is a member, we are following the example of Christ Himself, and in no way derogating from it.

The history of the Church, read by the light of faith, is the history of God's dealings with man through the

established order of His Providence. Accordingly we are continually confronted with the same facts; human nature, ever the same, is always tending downwards to return to the slime of sin from which it was raised by the Incarnation and Redemption of Jesus Christ. And thus as of old God sent His prophets to the chosen race to recall them from their wanderings, so now He appeals to man in the same manner —speaking to him by means of the miraculous example of His saints—in order to recall him from the evil path into which he has strayed. The lives of the early solitaries, St. Anthony, St. Macarius, St. Paul, and very many more, preached in this fashion, not in words, but by the example of their almost superhuman asceticism, to the effete and decadent civilization of Rome and Alexandria; and thousands who would have been insensible to any words, however eloquent, were converted by this silent testimony of the power of the Gospel of Christ over His disciples.

Probably there has never been a stranger means used by Almighty God to move the hearts of His people than in the case of the Pillar Saints of the third and fourth centuries. We read in the annals of these saints that, raised from the ground on pillars, these holy solitaries led a life of severe penance, praying, and preaching to the crowds whom their holy lives attracted to hear them.[1]

The world no doubt sees in these eccentricities of piety hallucinations similar to those of the Fakir or the Buddhist; but Christ gives a sure test for distinguishing the false religion from the true. He says: 'By their fruits you shall know them.' From the history of those times in which the holy lives of these men were recorded, we know what those fruits were. It is told in the Life of St. Simeon Stylites that his ecclesiastical superior (for the Pillar Saints lived under

[1] The Pillar Saints lived, as a rule, in the neighbourhood of towns, and by the singularity of their lives attracted large crowds, to whom they preached, and even administered the Sacraments.

strict obedience), to test his docility, ordered him to come down from his pillar and live like other men. At once he prepared to obey, recognizing in the voice of his superior a call to which every other should give way. The command was but given as a test; so no sooner had he shown his willingness to obey than it was withdrawn, and St. Simeon continued his life of penance and prayer.

Obedience, meekness, and humility—these are ever the marks of the true followers of Jesus Christ. When they are visible in the lives of men there can be no fear of the delusions of the evil one. But above all we see in these great saints and chosen disciples of our Lord the marks of their crucified Saviour. One, and that the most striking of all, is a burning love of souls. Like St. Paul, they are willing 'to be anathema,' so that they can bring souls to Christ. Again, there is an *extravagance*, if we may venture to use the word, in their love, which can only be paralleled by the love of their Divine Master. One drop of the Precious Blood of the Incarnate Son of God would have been sufficient to redeem a thousand worlds, but Jesus shed all His Blood for man. And thus, though they may differ in innumerable ways, as star differs from star in glory, they ever agree in this: they recall the image of Jesus to man; they bear His likeness in their souls, and even sometimes in their bodies, as in the marvellous instances of St. Francis of Assisi, or St. Teresa, or St. Catherine of Siena.

In short, the Church carries out in her recognition of the saints in glory, and her invocation of them, the spirit of those exquisite words which God put in the mouth of the prophet: 'Put me in remembrance, and let us plead together' (Is. xliii. 26).

Forgetfulness of God, of His goodness to man, taking benefits from His hand, riches, health, and prosperity, and forgetting to whose bounty we owe them—these are the sins,

the Scriptures teach us, which will merit the severest condemnation at the day of reckoning. 'Why, then, do the wicked live,' we read; 'are they advanced, and strengthened with riches? Their seed continueth before them, a multitude of kinsmen and of children's children in their sight. Their houses are secure and peaceable, and the rod of God is not upon them. Their cattle have conceived, and failed not: their cow has calved, and is not deprived of her fruit. Their little ones go out like a flock, and their children dance and play. They take the timbrel and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell.' (Job xxi. 7–13.) Forgetfulness of their Creator was, apparently, all their crime, but in the sight of God this is of all crimes the most unpardonable; and our Divine Saviour preaches the same great truth in the parable of Dives.

Of Dives He says 'he feasted sumptuously every day,' and when he died he was 'presently buried in hell.' It was not his riches which took him there, but the fact that his heart was in them. He forgot even his God, and the representative of God, the poor man Lazarus, at his gates. And this lesson is one that the Catholic Church unceasingly preaches to her children. By her feasts, her Rogation days, or days of special prayer and invocation of God and His saints in blessing the fruits of the earth; by her four Ember weeks, in which she deprecates God's wrath, deserved by the sins of man, and invokes His blessing on His ministers ordained at those times for His special service; finally, by her religious processions, her encouragement of devout pilgrimages to the shrines of the Blessed Virgin and the saints—by all these means she is ever striving to turn the attention of her children to the lessons of the Gospel, the example of her Divine Spouse, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the practice of holiness and an interior life.

Living in a Catholic country, therefore, for a time, esta-

blishes this understanding of the Church's meaning and intention in the heart of the newly converted more than any amount of reading and instruction could possibly succeed in doing. In fact, what looks like rank idolatry from without to the prejudiced mind, is, seen from *within*, a beautiful manifestation of the love of God and of those dear to Him, and above all a clear recognition of the supernatural life—the life we all hope to lead with God and His saints for all eternity—which is itself half-way to sanctity.

For instance, a district, say in the Tyrol, is threatened with famine. No rain has fallen for months and a bad harvest seems imminent, or a river has risen in flood and the crops are on the point of being destroyed. At once the inhabitants fly to the churches, our Lady's altar is besieged; perhaps the statue of a favourite saint, or some relic or shrine, is carried in procession, with incense and candles and banners waving, round the fields. If the prayers of the people are heard, then the exuberance of their gratitude—the *ex-votos* they hang in the churches—is as striking as the fervour of their petitions. God may withhold the favour asked, but to the simple faith of the true Catholic, peasant or proprietor (and if we are acquainted with these countries we shall acknowledge that simple faith does still exist), it is all the same. They recognize God's will in their troubles, and resign themselves.

A Protestant hears of the procession, perhaps witnesses it from the hotel window, and smiles at the superstition of the Popish peasantry. But see what glory God receives from the acts of faith, hope, and charity rising from the hearts of these people—from their confidence in Him and in His favoured children the saints, and in His Blessed Mother!

If we turn from the cult of the saints to the work done by them in the Church of God, what an astounding prospect opens out before our eyes! To take but a few instances out of thousands, there is that of St. Benedict, who, living in the

sixth century, propounded what has ever been called pre-eminently the 'Holy Rule;' who even in his own lifetime saw his Order spreading all over Italy, whence it passed within a hundred years of his death to France, Britain, and Spain. It was by missionaries of the Order of St. Benedict that England, the Low Countries, and Germany were evangelized. It has given innumerable martyrs and saints to the Church, and it is now, in mature age, showing as striking signs of vitality, by continually putting forth fresh offshoots, as it did in the earliest ages of its existence.

It has been not obscurely hinted by the æsthetic and reading public of the day (English as well as French) that it required the taste and discernment of M. Paul Sabatier to appreciate the exquisite poetry which lay enshrined in the legend of the seraphic St. Francis. That M. Sabatier has done much to earn the generous recognition of Catholics in his labour of love in editing the earliest record of the Saint cannot be denied. But the great work of St. Francis lay in the lesson of his own life; in that consuming love of his Divine Master which, burning in his own heart, lit such a flame of love in the hearts of his disciples and followers that it burns even in this day. Think of all the glorious saints, male and female, that the Order of St. Francis has given to the service of God—St. Clare, St. Bonaventure, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Colette: of their missionary labours, their work for souls, and above all of the prayer and intercession rising from the hearts of these—and of how many tens of thousands of others, in the six hundred years that the Order has existed—before the throne of God.

Besides the first and second Orders (the second Order being that of the Poor Clares for women), St. Francis also instituted the third Order, which, spread through every country, in all ranks and classes and occupations of life, is ever leavening the world with the maxims of the Gospel, the love of Jesus Christ, and of the poverty of the holy founder

But if once we began to pass in review the work of the saints in the Church of Christ, to what lengths should we not be led! Should, however, anyone wish to glean some idea of what *one* Order (and this time let it be a female one) has done, and is doing, for the honour and glory of God and the salvation of souls, let him call at the Convent of the Sisters of Charity in the Rue du Bac in Paris.

The Order of Sisters of Charity was founded by St. Vincent de Paul in 1630. It has in less than 300 years spread over the entire world, and numbers about 20,000 members. At this convent—the mother-house—he will see, among its 500 occupants, sisters from all parts of the world, from America, China, Germany, Great Britain, and Spain; and from time to time, all the superiors returning to the mother-house, to report upon their various houses and good works. Some have the management of hospitals, others of poor-schools or orphanages, but all are working together, in perfect union, with the same great object. There is no spot where a Catholic witnesses a more striking illustration of the universality of the Church, and of its loving care for the poor of Christ, than in this great convent.

The care of the poor! Whatever our starting-point is in considering the subject of this chapter, we always find it brings us round to the thought of the poor. To neglect the poor is scarcely to be a Catholic, for the Catholic religion brings rich and poor together as no other religion has ever attempted to do, as it is in that Church alone that the poor are looked upon as representatives of Christ Himself, and nursed and succoured, from motives, not of philanthropy, but of the love of God.

Linked among Catholic instincts with love of the poor is love of God's churches. In fact, the two devotions go hand in hand. 'The poor you have always with you,' was our Divine Saviour's answer to Judas, 'but Me not always.' How constantly is the word of the traitor, 'All this might be

sold and given to the poor,' in the mouth of those who love to take Pharisaical scandal at the riches which the faithful, in Catholic countries, heap at the feet of our Lord in His tabernacle or offer at the shrines of His Blessed Mother! 'God help us,' says worthy Bishop Andrewes, 'when Judas must reform Mary Magdalene!' The world sees nothing to carp at in the thousands, or hundreds of thousands, locked up in the caskets of nobles or the regalia of kings, but it complains bitterly when the question is that of the splendid wardrobe of the Madonna of Atocha, or the sacred vessels of the great churches of Rome or Madrid. Probably there was no country more generous in its benefactions to the Church than our own, before the evil days of the Reformation. A recent writer says: 'It is difficult to realise the splendour of the display that would have met the eye of him who entered one of our great cathedrals or wealthy parish churches on very high festivals in the three or four centuries preceding the Reformation. The Church was the nursing mother of the arts, which lent themselves in their turn to the adornment of her services. The monks were the goldsmiths of the Middle Ages. St. Dunstan himself was the patron of their craft in England; what wonder, then, that the wealth of gold and silver in its shrines and treasuries was immense, so immense as to be nearly incredible?'[1]

'Scotland was far poorer than England, yet what we know of its churches shows that Scottish generosity vied with English in decorating the sanctuary. In 1559, on July 7, in fear of the church-plundering to which Knox was exciting the nobles and the mobs, the Bishop of Aberdeen distributed the gold and silver plate of his cathedral into the hands of his canons and others for safety. A record was made at the time. There was a silver statue of our Lady weighing 114 oz.; also a chalice of pure gold with diamonds and rubies in its

[1] *Old English Plate*, by W. Cripps, p. 173; Bridgett's *History of the Holy Eucharist*, ii. 104.

foot, and its gold paten (the gift of Bishop Dunbar), which weighed 52 oz.; a great silver "Eucharist," or monstrance, double-gilt and artificially wrought; two silver candlesticks weighing 6 lbs. 14 oz., and about 1,000 oz. of other silver plate. Bishop Gavin Dunbar alone had given to his cathedral 900 oz. of silver.'[1]

Though the sacred vessels were never willingly alienated in Catholic countries for any purpose except under the pressure of necessity or for the redemption of captives, such alienation was not by any means unusual with those objects in view.

'It is related of St. Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, that during a great famine he sold all the plate of his church to purchase food for the poor, saying, "that if the church be reduced to poverty it can again be replenished, but that if the poor are starved it is not in the power of man to recall them to life."'[2]

If in these days we must search closely to find, even in countries still Catholic, a manifestation of the love which the Church ever bears to the saints, the Mother of God, and above all, the Sacrament of the altar, it was not so in past ages, so truly called the Ages of Faith. No country outdid England, in the days before the Reformation, in its love and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. The feast of Corpus Christi was kept in these islands with a fervour which could spring only from the heart of the people. It brought all classes together. The great nobles and the people vied with each other in doing honour to their common Master and Lord. The guilds walked in solemn procession; flowers mingled with rushes were strewed before the path trod by the bishop or priest bearing the blessed monstrance. Nothing was omitted which could give honour to the passage of Jesus hidden under the Sacramental veil. Alluding to the suppression of these holy and joyous processions, Davies (in the

[1] *Ibid.* p. 105. [2] *Ibid.* p. 114.

'Records of York,' quoted by Bridgett) remarks: 'It was unquestionably with the utmost reluctance and after a protracted struggle that the citizens of York were ultimately constrained to relinquish their celebration of the Corpus Christi festival, which during nearly three centuries they had regarded as the great holiday of the year, the day on which their "pageants of delight" were played. As the Corpus Christi pageants were gradually discontinued, other spectacles and diversions were provided for the entertainment of the citizens. The diversion of bear-baiting was occasionally authorised by the lord mayor and his council, who countenanced the cruel sport by their presence.' Alas! poor Christian people of York! Surely, if the fantastic tricks of men in power ever made the angels weep, it was when the Sacrament of love was taken from you, and you were invited to bear-baiting instead! To the honour of the good citizens of York, Mr. Davies adds: 'But none of these entertainments appear to have afforded the same gratification, and to have been undertaken with the same alacrity, as the Corpus Christi pageants for which they were substituted. A degree of coercion was sometimes necessary to induce the citizens to take their allotted parts in the processions.'[1]

The devotion of the English people to the Holy Eucharist showed itself, among other ways, in its reverence for the Viaticum carried to the dying. We all know, or have heard of, the touching sight exhibited in Catholic countries when our Lord is carried in procession to the sick: numbers of people, attracted by the bell which is rung at intervals, joining the little procession and walking behind the priest, praying devoutly the while. When the house is reached they form, as it were, a guard of honour on each side of the bed, and, kneeling there, adore our Lord come to visit and comfort the dying, and to give him strength for his

[1] *Records of York*, by R. Davies, F.S.A.; *History of the Holy Eucharist*, ii. 270.

last long journey. The details which are handed down to us, sometimes in prose and sometimes in rude rhyme, show that our English ancestors were no whit behind their brethren in other countries in this respect.

We give a specimen of the quaint rhyme which gives instructions first to the priest and then to the congregation on their duties. To the priest John Myrc says:[1]

When thou shalt to sick gone,
A clean surplice cast thee on;
Take thy stole with thee right,
And pull thy hood over thy sight.
Bear thine Host anent thy breast,
In a box that is honest.
Make thy clerk before thee ging,
To bear light and bell ring.

In another place he speaks of the duties of the people:

Teach them also, I thee pray,
That when they walken in the way,
And see the priest again them coming,
God's Body with him bearing,
Then with great devotion
Teach them there to kneel adown,
Fair ne foul spare they not,
To worship Him that all hath wrought
For glad may that man be
That once in the day may Him see.

'We almost ask ourselves as we read these old documents, Did these things really take place in England? Were all its country roads and bridle-paths used to carry the King of kings? Did He once visit in the Sacrament of His ineffable love each little cabin in the forest, in the marsh, or on the mountain-side? Did the people rest from their labours when the church-bell sounded, and,

[1] *Instructions*, &c. I. 1957 *sq.* *Hist. of the Holy Eucharist*, ii. 70.

uncovering their heads or kneeling in the furrow, repeat the words of faith and adoration? Did the children hush their game, and the traffickers suspend their traffic, and the knight rein in his horse and dismount, at the well-known sound of the bell telling that our Lord, as in the days of His earthly life, was going to visit Peter's mother-in-law or the centurion's servant? Ah, He is still carried through the streets of our busy cities, and even the lanes of the country receive a rare visit, but His passage is unannounced, and unsuspected by the multitude. "There hath stood One among them whom they know not."'[1] In turning out this Divine Guest from our country and our homes, we have, alas! got rid also of the spirit of piety and fervour which animated our Catholic forefathers.

In this country the church, even to Catholics, is too often a place to be visited at decent intervals—a matter more of duty than of pleasure. Again, saying prayers, assisting at Mass is the luxury of the rich; the poor have no time for it; it is not, as in Catholic countries, the joy and solace of all in sorrow, in trouble, or in want. Is it not an object we all have at heart to rekindle the faith and love of our Catholic ancestors in our own hearts and those of our fellow-countrymen; and to revive the practices of our holy faith, the devotions to the Sacrament of the altar, the Mother of God, and the saints, once more amongst us? To effect this prayer is required, and good example, and distributing books which will bring the truths of Catholicity before eyes blinded by the misrepresentations of centuries.

Above all, our efforts should be directed to bringing back the influences of religion into the daily occupations and interests and even pleasures of life.

The practical effect of Protestantism has ever been to divorce religion from everyday life. The object of the Catholic Church is to raise the lives of her children, by

[1] *Ibid.* ii. 70.

means of their religion, to a level where there should be no felt want of harmony in the constant introduction of pious thoughts and practices into their midst. In other words, her one aim is to make her children's lives more supernatural. She would urge them (as the Apostle says) to have 'their conversation in heaven;' and to this object her efforts are constantly directed. But it is not in the domain of daily life and habits alone that the Church seeks to influence man and subdue his nature to the sweet yoke of Christ. She appeals also to his higher aspirations in order to enlist them in the same service. And thus it has been well said of her, 'She unites the deepest metaphysics to the most perfect and, if one may say so, the most efficacious simplicity. It is the only Christian religion which possesses both the Summa of St. Thomas and the Catechism. We cannot deny the depths of its teaching. It excels in catching souls, in capturing them betimes, and in keeping them for good. If it is profound in its theology and in its mysticism, it is no less so in the government of souls, and in the simplicity of its instructions to the young. Children love it, the multitude understand it, the learned admire it. It has an answer for all. No other moral force in the course of ages can be compared to it; no other has introduced so many ideas into the principles of that universal morality which is called the old-fashioned morality of our fathers!'[1]

There is one Catholic instinct which we should not fail to cultivate on entering the Church, and that is a filial submission to authority. If we turn to what one of the Fathers has called 'the impregnable rock of Scripture,' we find these words: 'Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls: that they may do this with joy, and not with grief' (Heb. xiii. 17). It is popularly supposed that the spirit of the age is opposed to submission to an extent

[1] *Christianity or Agnosticism?* p. 481.

unknown in former days; in fact, that the virtues of humility and meekness of heart inculcated by Christ, and practised in the Middle Ages, were those of humanity in swaddling-bands. Mankind has now discarded them. A study of ecclesiastical history will lead us to far different conclusions. The spirit of man has ever striven with the Spirit of God: and the ways of God are not changed. By one means only has the Divine Wisdom kept the Church instituted by Him free from error: that is, by the institution of what Leo XIII. calls 'a living, authoritative, and permanent Magisterium.'[1] For, as he points out in another place: 'He could not have willed that the faith should be *one* if He did not provide means sufficient for the preservation of this unity.'[2] And thus St. Cyprian says of the Roman Church that 'it is the root and mother of the Catholic Church, the chair of Peter, and the principal Church whence sacerdotal unity has its source.'[3] He calls it the *chair of Peter* because it is occupied by the successor of Peter: he calls it the *principal Church* on account of the primacy conferred on Peter himself and his legitimate successors; and the *source of unity* because the Roman Church is the efficient cause of unity in the Christian commonwealth.[4]

In a joint pastoral letter on 'The Church and Liberal Catholicism,' the Cardinal-Archbishop and bishops of this country have pointed out in forcible terms the risks to faith involved in minimising the teaching power of the Church and restricting it to dogmas which have been defined as 'of faith,' 'the obstinate denial of which would entail the guilt of heresy.'[5] Further, it teaches that the Church requires

[1] *Satis Cognitum* (Companion to the *Encyclical*, Rev. Sydney Smith, S.J.), p. 21.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 13.

[3] *Ep. xlviii. ad Cornelium*, n. 3, and *Ep. lix. ad eundem*, n. 14; *ibid.* p. 35.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 35.

[5] *A Joint Pastoral Letter on the Church and Liberal Catholicism*, p. 15.

more than a mere 'conformity of mind with the mind of the Church,' for such might be 'the result of private judgment, and a mere coincidence. Conformity of this kind might even cover doctrines which the Church teaches as Articles of Faith, and may be found in persons who have never entered the Church. Indeed, such accidental conformity is compatible with a total absence of all faith.' [1] It is therefore of the utmost importance that converts (the pastoral goes on to remark) should be thoroughly instructed on the ground and motive of Faith before being received into the Church. 'Unless they believe that they have found in the Catholic Church the Divine Teacher, they must not be admitted into her pale, no matter how many of the articles of Catholic Faith they may assent to. In other words, they must believe in the authority and infallibility of the Divine Teacher in matters of faith and morals as an essential and fundamental condition for reception into the Church. All the articles of Catholic Faith, all the verities of religion must be accepted on the authority and claim of the Teacher, not on the taste, will, or judgment of the individual. Our Lord when upon the earth exacted this kind of submission from His disciples; and if men would be His disciples now they must submit in like manner to the authority of the Divine Teacher, speaking in the Church.' [2]

This pastoral has been formally approved of by the Pope in a letter addressed to the English Hierarchy dated February 11, 1901.

Before concluding this chapter it may be opportune to say something on the subject of miracles, as they exist in the present day in the Church. The miraculous element is one that we constantly encounter in the Catholic Church. It may be said to meet us on the threshold at our conversion. We cannot travel in any Catholic country without coming across shrines where numberless *ex-voto* offerings

[1] *Ibid.* p. 14. [2] *Ibid.* p. 17.

given by grateful recipients of supernatural favours testify to graces received. We know that in past ages the same belief existed all over our country. Many were the places of pilgrimage, to which thousands of pilgrims thronged every year—our Lady of Walsingham, St. Etheldreda's, the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Winifred's Well, and a hundred others whose very names have been forgotten. It is natural therefore for the convert, as indeed for the Catholic, to ask himself: Is it necessary for *me* to believe all these devout marvels?

The answer the Church makes is most decisively in the negative. It is not *necessary* to believe every or any special miracle of modern times, and we need only do so on the same grounds that we believe any other phenomenon of which we have not been witnesses: that is, on the testimony of persons of authority and credibility. Neither the miracles which have occurred at Pompeii, Lourdes, or at our own St. Winifred's Well are of faith, though few Catholics would withhold their belief in miracles which have been authenticated by ecclesiastics of the highest character and dignity, and which have the further mark of authenticity in the approval given by tribunals appointed by the Holy See to investigate into them. What the Catholic Church does, however, insist upon is the explicit belief that miracles were not restricted to Apostolic times. To doubt this would indeed be to condemn as impostors some of the greatest Saints and Doctors of the Church, and to shut one's eyes to the whole course of God's Providence in past ages.

That God in all times has suspended the laws of nature when it seemed good in His sight, no believer in revelation can deny, and that Christ rewarded faith with miracles and denied them when that grace was wanting is also undeniable. Our Divine Saviour promises all things to faith. 'With faith nothing shall be impossible to you,' He says to His disciples. 'All things whatsoever ye shall ask in

prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' Besides those specific promises He tells them the signs that shall follow them that believe: 'In My name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover' (Mark xvi. 17, 18).

To the non-Catholic, brought up in the belief that miracles are things of the past, and that Christ having ascended to the Father held no further speech with man, the revelations of the Son of God to His Saints, His mystical espousals with St. Catherine of Siena, His familiar colloquies with St. Teresa, the miracles which attended their lives, are well-nigh incredible. The convert, however, who has received the gift of faith will find no difficulty in believing in the favours bestowed by God on the children of His Church; and equally so is this the case with the Catholic-born, who, brought up to believe in the most stupendous of miracles, the Holy Eucharist, will find no proof which God can give of His loving care of man incredible or exaggerated. No miracle, however astounding, can excel the one which is daily wrought upon our altars.

ON MARRIAGE AND THE BRINGING-UP OF CHILDREN; WITH A FEW WORDS ON MIXED MARRIAGES

The Prophet-King, speaking of man, says: 'Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels. Thou hast crowned him with honour and with glory.' Man, therefore, is possessed of a great dignity in the sight of God. But if we turn from what he is in the sight of God to what he appears to be in his own sight and that of his fellow-man—strange anomaly! we find quite other opinions held, and they are as derogatory to him as the first is great and elevating.

To some he forms part of an insignificant race in an inferior planet in one of the great solar systems. To others, certain modern scientists for instance, his position is even more degraded; his Scriptural claim to a Paradisiacal birth is smiled upon, and his descent traced from the lower organisations. If his past is wrapped in mystery, to many his future is no less so. And this lowering of man by his fellow-man, and his complacent acceptance of the position, is not restricted to theories on his origin and destiny. It affects him in all his relations in life, above all in those that have to do with the other sex, consequently in a special manner with regard to the matrimonial tie or contract.

To learn, therefore, what was God's meaning in creating man, what his aims should be in this life, and the glorious destiny which awaits him hereafter, we must go to the Word

of God, as interpreted for us in the teaching of His Church. There only will man discover the true solution of all his difficulties. 'For with Thee,' we are told, 'is the Fountain of Life, and in Thy Light we shall see light.'

When the Pharisees came to our Lord, 'tempting Him,' they asked: 'Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? Who answering said to them: Have you not read that He who made man from the beginning made them male and female? And He said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. They say to him: Why, then, did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put away? He saith to them: Because Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so.' (Matt. xix. 3.) Those words, 'from the beginning it was not so,' are a key to the whole situation as regards holy matrimony, as the Church ever calls it, in the mind of God.

To understand what marriage was in the beginning, we must go back to the eternal designs of the Creator on His creatures. We know, in the first place, that He created the angels at one and the same time: He spoke the word and myriads of these glorious beings came into existence. But when He saw fit to create man it was not so. He created them male and female, and it was by means of the human family, and by correspondence with the grace given to him —for man was constituted in grace—that God, in His merciful designs for Him, purposed to raise him up to occupy the place in heaven vacated by the fallen angels through the sin of pride. The institution of marriage, therefore, was in the very forefront of God's dispensation in the creation of man. 'The first marriage was celebrated in the earthly Paradise

between Adam and Eve while yet they were innocent. It was God Himself who dictated the conditions of marriage. Unity was to be its very basis: in other words, the wife was to have but one husband, the husband was to have but one wife. It was the type of a still more glorious unity which was not to be revealed till a later period. . . . Hence God blessed marriage at the very commencement of the world, and with a blessing which was to be permanent, for, as the Church teaches us in the Liturgy, it was not recalled, either by the punishment inflicted on original sin, or by the sentence which destroyed the world by the deluge.'[1] God's designs were frustrated by sin, for the free-will of our first parents was made use of to disobey His commands. As man was punished by having to cultivate an ungrateful soil—growing weeds instead of flowers as in the pleasant garden, watered by the four rivers of Paradise—so woman had also her punishment; in sorrow she was to bring forth children. But this was not the only punishment to which sin condemned her. Man in his fallen state is ever a tyrant, and the natural victim of his tyranny is woman. Sin, therefore, and that clouding of the mind and faculties called by theologians *fomes peccati* (or groundwork of sin) were ever dragging man down, and woman with him. How was it possible, then, that man could be reinstated in the place from which he had fallen? That human means, even when ordained by God, were of no avail we can see by the failure of the Mosaic Law to restrain the passions of man, or to restore the dignity of woman. God alone, Who made man, could restore him to the place from whence he had fallen, and this He did by assuming his human nature, by giving him a model of all holy womanhood in the person of His Blessed Mother, by sanctifying the virtuous union of man and woman by His own Divine presence at the

[1] 'Præfatio super Sponsam.' *Liturgical Year: Paschal Time*, ii. 305–6.

marriage feast of Cana. Finally, in a most astounding manner, He realises in His own Divine Person the highest ideal of union by taking for His Bride—as He foretold by the Prophets—the Church of the elect, 'that is, the human race purified by baptism and enriched with supernatural gifts. As a dowry He gave her His own Precious Blood and merits, and then united her to Himself for ever. This Spouse is One, He lovingly calls her His only One; on her part she has no other but Him. Here we have revealed to us the divine type on which marriage was formed, and which, the Apostle teaches us, derives its holiness and dignity from its resemblance to the union between Christ and His Church.' [1]

It is thus that God raises man from the earth on which he grovelled, lifting him once more into that high and supernatural sphere which He had destined him to occupy 'from the beginning,' and with him his help-meet, woman. What could be more beautiful and inspiring than St. Paul's words to both: 'Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church: because we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.' (Eph. v. 25.) This is, then, the gospel of love preached by the Son of man. Love is at the root of all: love of God for man, united to him by the closest of all ties, the tie of baptism, by which he is incorporated into Christ by sanctifying grace; of the Holy Eucharist, in which he becomes one with the Divine Spouse and so 'a member of

[1] *Ibid.* p. 307.

His body, of His flesh, and of His bones;' and conjugal love founded on this—the highest ideal of which human nature is capable—the union between Jesus Christ and the faithful soul in His Church.

If therefore a loophole for escape could be found from the plain meaning of the words: 'Those whom God has joined let no man put asunder,' St. Paul's words would dispose of it for ever. The sanction of divorce has no place in the Church founded by Jesus Christ; the two doctrines of the inviolability of marriage and the unity of Jesus Christ with His Church stand and fall together.

It is on the inviolability of marriage, likewise, that woman's position both as wife and mother rests. Where it is shaken or permanently endangered, her interests are shaken or destroyed; more, all family life is imperilled. 'To restore woman to her rightful place in the economy of the human race, to make man recognize her, acknowledge her, and treat her as his equal—with a personal dignity as perfect as his own—was part of the mission of the Redeemer of mankind . . . . He resealed it with its two essential characteristics of unity and indissolubility; and prohibited, as subversive of it, polygamy and divorce. He did more. He sanctified it by a sacrament. Sanctifying matrimony, He sanctified the family; and sanctifying the family, He sanctified society. Society rested on the family, the family rested on matrimony; and when the matrimonial contract was elevated to the dignity of a sacrament, society was sanctified in its foundations and at its centre. The result was Christendom; and in Christendom the dignity of woman.'[1]

Jesus, then, by His birth and Incarnation—the marriage of His Divinity with our humanity—has done two things. He has raised woman from the dunghill, *de stercore erigens pauperem*, and set her on her rightful pedestal as the

[1] *Christian Marriage*, by Rev. W. Humphrey, S.J., p. 59.

companion of man, the honoured mother of his children. He has thus restored family life to the place it held in His eternal designs. Again, as man must in a sense be guided by his ideals, He has shown by His Divine example what love, one of the strongest passions by which man is led, should be; that love of which the spouse in the Canticles speaks, crying: 'Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm: for love is strong as death . . . neither can floods drown it: if a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing' (Cant. viii. 6, 7). Marvellous are the words in which Jesus alludes to His love for man. He rejoices as a Bridegroom to run His course. He forbids His disciples to fast whilst He was on earth, saying: 'Shall the children of the Bridegroom fast when the Bridegroom is with them?' As Coventry Patmore, the poet of home life, says, 'God has declared to us His mystic rapture in His marriage with Humanity in twice saying, "Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo bene complacui." He expressly and repeatedly calls this marriage, and pronounces the marriage of man and woman to be its symbol. *This is the burning heart of the Universe.*'[1]

Draw near, then, to the crib at Bethlehem, Christian souls united to your God by the nearest, the tenderest of all ties, draw near to where Jesus lies, poor, unknown to the powerful and rich, neglected and insignificant, a hidden God. *Vere tu es Deus absconditus, Domine Deus noster.* It is there He celebrates His espousals with your soul. And not only with you virgins who have given yourselves to Him by the vows of religion, but you also, fathers and mothers of families, saints and sinners; Jesus will have you all. None are excluded who respond to His invitation, and come with meek and contrite hearts to His feet. And at His side ever near Him, on earth as in heaven see His Mother, model of maid, virgin, spouse, mother and widow: and

[1] *Memoirs of Coventry Patmore*, ii. 67.

St. Joseph, chaste husband of Mary and foster-father of her Divine Child.

Holy and blessed Pair, example to all time of sanctity and perfection in married life, who can tell what influence has come out from you, in the same way as grace came from Jesus in His public ministry, 'healing all?' Because of you the world can never sink back to what it was before the coming of its Creator. In spite of ignoring you, the world can never escape from your influence. What temptations have been repelled, what bitter words hushed, what messages of peace and goodwill whispered by the angels to the souls of men have been heard and fostered by those who have taken up their abode at your feet! But not in Bethlehem only does Jesus give us proof of His consuming love for man; it was for him He left His Mother's and St. Joseph's side at the age of twelve, to prove to them and all mankind that He would fain, if it were possible, anticipate the time when He was to begin to work and suffer for them. And, as He said to His disciples, the same love He bestowed on His blessed Mother He gives to those who truly love Him; for in accomplishing the Divine Will we shall be to Him brother and sister, and mother and spouse.

But the love of Jesus went further than giving an example to man of the beauty and perfection of family life alone; for, as has been well said, 'The primary and the principal end of matrimony was, and is, maternity.' He instituted the Sacrament of Marriage, a type, as we have already seen (in the words of St. Paul), of the union between Himself and His Church; the object of both unions being the same. 'Thus did the New Law bring back to marriage its primeval blessing and make it once more a holy state, which, so far from its being an obstacle, is a means to virtue, and peoples both earth and heaven with elect.'[1]

If we think for one moment of the trials to which man

[1] *Liturgical Year: Paschal Time*, ii. 308.

and woman joined by an indissoluble tie are exposed in their journey through life, what wisdom and fitness do we not perceive in the merciful institution of a Sacrament by which special graces are applied to those who worthily enter into its bonds! For these trials must necessarily be from within as well as from without, and it is by means of the grace of the Sacrament that man is protected from himself —for he is ever his own worst enemy—from the natural appetites, irascible as well as sensual, which are ever ready to lead him into sin; from fickleness and inconstancy. It sanctifies the sorrows of married life, as it cements the mutual love which is given as a help to bear them, to those who 'marry in Christ.' Above all, it is a source of blessing and heaven-sent guidance in the bringing-up of children. Could any hope be more ennobling to the soul of man than this, that through the mercy of God the grace should be granted him of giving souls to God, and helping to swell the chorus of praise which will rise to God to all eternity in heaven?

And if special graces are required by man to fulfil the duties of his state, no less does she who shares his fate, and by the sacramental tie is made one with him, require them also. Married life demands sacrifices of both alike. Pain and sorrow, tribulations of the flesh, as the Apostle calls them, are the common lot of all, but more especially of the woman; it is only by a faithful correspondence to the graces given through the channel of the Sacraments that she can hope to surmount the weakness natural to her sex, and reach the perfection to which God has destined her. For who can doubt, after reading the glorious lives of St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Louis, St. Frances of Rome, and many others, that perfection is within reach of all in every state of life; and that it is possible to attain the greatest height of sanctity while living in the world as devoted husbands, and wives, and parents?

The supernatural lives of the saints, their miracles and special vocations, are for our admiration, not always for our imitation; it is with the lives of the ordinary Christians of the second century as told to us in the pages of Tertullian, whose privileges we likewise enjoy, whose Sacraments we —unworthy—partake of, that we may well compare our lives and feel ashamed! 'How shall I find words,' he says, 'to describe the happiness of a marriage whose tie is formed by the hands of the Church, which is confirmed by the sacred oblation, sealed by the blessing proclaimed by the angels, and ratified by the Heavenly Father? How wonderful a yoke is that which is taken up by two of the faithful united together in the same hope, in the same law, and in the same duty! They have the same God for their Father, they serve the same Master, they are two in one flesh, they are one heart and soul. They pray together, they prostrate together, they fast together, they instruct each other, they exhort each other, they encourage each other. You see them together in the church and at the Holy Table. They share in each other's trials, persecutions, and joys. There are no secrets between them; no such thing as shunning each other, or being wearied of each other's company. They have not to hide from each other, in order to visit the sick or the needy. Their alms excite no disputes; they approve of each other's sacrifices; they interfere not with each other's practices of piety. They have no need to make the sign of the cross stealthily; neither are they afraid to give way in each other's presence to feelings of love and gratitude for their God. They sing together the psalms and canticles, and if there be any rivalry between them it is which of them shall best sing the praises of God. Oh! these are the marriages which gladden the eyes and ears of Christ. These are the marriages to which He imparts the blessing of peace. He has said He would be where two are united together; therefore He is in such a

house as the one we are describing, and the enemy is not there.' [1]

That a marriage such as Tertullian speaks of is to a certain extent an ideal one, and therefore not of frequent occurrence in any century of the Christian era, can hardly be doubted. But that in every century of the Church's history such lives of piety and good works *have* been led by men and women in the marriage state we can well believe, for probably we have all occasionally witnessed them in our own experience. Exceptional they must certainly be in all times, but are they not more especially so now?

It is one of the characteristics of the present day that the great things of life—religion, the marriage state, the bringing-up of children—are treated lightly; and those which have to do with the pleasure, or physical well-being, or comfort of men, such as wealth, sport, or intellectual success (especially should it lead to advancement in life), are looked upon as the only matters worthy of serious attention. This is strikingly exemplified with regard to marriage. To the thinking man, or indeed to any onlooker who sees below the surface of things, it is astounding how many men and women rush into marriage with next to no knowledge of each other's character or principles, or any definite idea of the tremendous duties they are about to take upon themselves. And yet can it be disputed that for such a state, where man and woman are brought in closest relation with each other with the prospect before them of life together, with all its interests in common, it is of the utmost importance, in order that existence should not be a continual trial, that their characters should harmonise, their aims should be similar, their objects in life one and the same?

From the cheerful optimism with which, as a rule, an engagement is hailed, and the general feeling, shared by the interested parties, that a little 'falling in love,' like charity,

[1] Tertullian, *Ad Uxorem*, lib. ii. cap. ix.: *ibid.* p. 310.

covers a multitude of sins—as long, of course, as the essential point of *means* is fully secured—one might be tempted to think that marriage is looked upon generally as a curious and interesting experiment, from the results of which, if unsuccessful, there may be chance of escape, like any other. That the happiness of two human beings in this world, and possibly in the next, is at stake, is a point that seems sometimes to be lost sight of in a multitude of side-issues.

Love in itself is so great a good—surely, whether human or divine, the greatest of all—that one hesitates to say a word which would sound like a disparagement of it; yet falling in love, in the young and frivolous, may not always mean that deep and tender passion, love in its highest sense, which ennobles the character, makes all sacrifices possible and endures to the end. Alas! the little veneer of mutual attraction or admiration which goes by that name sometimes wears through in the troubles of life; temper, insincerity, a hundred defects, invisible while the glamour lasted, become visible in all their native uncomeliness. Finally, when total disenchantment is reached, what is there to fall back upon, unless it is religion and the grace of the sacrament, which makes that possible which to human nature would be impossible to endure?

There is no subject that is more continually coming to the surface in these days than that of mixed marriages. The difficulties they involve may be treated lightly, in the manner we have described above; or they may be disposed of with considerable qualms, and only when the reasons for such marriages appear to be unsurmountable, that is when mutual affection has gained the mastery to such an extent as to make it out of the question for either side to draw back.

That there is something to be said for mixed marriages would probably be generally admitted, but that the Church

reprobates them is shown by the difficulty with which she grants dispensations for them.[1]

We can never forget—for the Scripture never ceases to remind us of it—the high destiny to which we are called as children of God's Church. 'You are the salt of the earth,' were our Lord's words to His disciples, and again we read: 'Because thou art a holy people to the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be His peculiar people of all the peoples that are upon earth . . . and hath loved you' (Deut. vii. 6, 8). This is a great destiny—a noble vocation. Should we not hesitate before we risk anything who have so much to lose? And risk it we must if we marry out of the Catholic Church. Moreover—as the Bishop of Salford has recently pointed out in a letter to his diocese on the evils of mixed marriages—it is a most prolific source of leakage in the Church, and not only an evil in itself but leads to others: to loss of faith, unhappiness in the home, and tepidity and indifference in the discharge of religious duties.

It would be only wise for one about to marry a non-Catholic to face certain facts which sooner or later will in all probability force themselves upon him. One is that this is a drawback in life which tends to get more serious as the years advance. Another, that the punishment—or, if this be too severe a word, the disadvantages—are apt to fall more heavily on the children of the marriage than on the parent. Further, can we doubt that life will present itself under entirely new conditions to a man or woman who has taken this step? Another may take life easily. How can he, if he has any faith, with so much at stake?

Controversy, at best but a broken reed, too often

[1] The Church grants dispensations on these conditions: (1) That the non-Catholic party shall not interfere with the religion of the Catholic; (2) that the marriage ceremony shall take place in a Catholic church only; (3) that the children of such marriages (of both sexes) shall be brought up in the Catholic religion.

piercing the hand that leans on it, would indeed be fatal between husband and wife. Common-sense shows that by one means only conversions can be effected: that is, by earnest, humble, unremitting prayer, accompanied if possible by practices of penance, for we know by the words of our Lord that certain crowning graces are obtained only 'by prayer and fasting.' It is not too much to say that there have been wives and husbands who have devoted their lives to this object, and counted themselves blessed when, at the eleventh hour, the grace has been granted to their prayer. But can a life so spent, in continual stress of mind, in constant watchfulness over self—for does not example rank next in importance to prayer?—can such a life be reckoned a happy one? In addition to the positive drawback, there are negative ones, which are of no less salient a character. The beautiful picture drawn for us by Tertullian shows what married life is between two of the same faith. It is, in love, peace, and perfect sympathy, a foretaste of heaven. How much of this would be wanting when husband and wife dare not speak, except in general terms which mean so little, on the thoughts which must, or should, lie nearest to both their hearts!

Besides the question of happiness there is the still more important one of duty, especially as it affects the lives for which parents are responsible to God, namely the children born of such marriages. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of oneness of faith in the parents as a factor in the bringing up and development of the spiritual life of the children. It is a delusion, though not an uncommon one, that children are born good. On the contrary, they have the germs of much evil in them. Their natural inclination is to resist good impressions; to assimilate the evil they come across rather than the good. The 'broad way' our Lord speaks of is no less attractive to the child, as far as he knows it, than to the man. But it is here that the influence

of parents comes in. They have the first chance with their children, if they only know how to make use of it.

A Christian mother seizes her infant's first thoughts and actions, and dedicates them to God. She does not leave this to servants, though if she has a pious substitute in the nursery—a matter, indeed, of vital importance—the work of training a child is carried on there also. She takes her child to church, into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, so that he may not only derive benefit from that Divine Presence from his earliest youth but his first conscious impressions may go back to it, and be associated with it. She is careful not to overdo prayer and spiritual exercises, so as to connect religion in a child's mind (which otherwise would inevitably be the case) with tedium; on the contrary, following the Church's example, she seeks to invest it with what appeals to his heart and imagination. There are a hundred ways in which a mother can interest her children in subjects which have to do with God and His service; for the Catholic Church puts such means without number into her hands—the crib at Christmas, the Crucifix, Bible-history, the stories of the Saints and Martyrs, all of which are infinitely attractive to children if properly treated.

As the child grows up, these bonds between him and his parents, so far from being loosened, should gain in strength. Confession, Confirmation, the First Communion, should be, and are in a united family, as so many family feasts as well as the principal events in the spiritual life of the youthful Christian, for are they not all opportunities of strengthening the tie between parent and son, as well as that between the son and his loving Saviour? Besides the early bringing-up of children there is the question of their education, whether they are to go to a Catholic or Protestant school —a question of the day which, if the parents are not agreed in their religious opinions, is almost certain to come prominently to the front.

The Holy See has spoken with no uncertain voice regarding this fresh danger which menaces the Church in this country. Thus the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, recently, in answer to an appeal to consider the question, having carefully deliberated upon it, gave as their judgment 'that the frequentation of Public Schools of this kind cannot be without a grave danger to faith and morals, or be held consistent with the use of those means which the Church properly prescribes for the sanctification of souls; and that therefore an obligation is incumbent on Catholic parents not to expose their sons to this grave danger.'[1]

The arguments against the education of Catholic boys in the great English Public Schools have been very well put in a pamphlet written by Father John Norris, of the Birmingham Oratory. After some exceedingly practical remarks on the risks to which a boy's faith and morals are exposed in such schools, he sums up the negative dangers thus: (*a*) The absence of religious instruction, (*b*) the absence of Catholic atmosphere, (*c*) the absence of any idea of the supernatural. Under the second heading he writes: 'Atmosphere is almost everything in training the young, especially in those most important years which a boy spends in a Public School, in many ways the most important in life, from fourteen to eighteen, the years that mark the transition from childhood to manhood, when the formation of character takes definite root and shape, when a boy realises himself more and more every day, and his eyes and mind are opening more and more widely to the world around him and especially to the world of sense, the world of pleasure and excitement, and when there is taking place in him that struggle, on which so much depends, the struggle between good and evil, which is so keen, so severe, so trying: when

[1] Quoted in *A Letter on the Catholic Church in England, and her Schools and Colleges*, by the Cardinal-Archbishop of Westminster, p. 13.

a boy is so sensitive to his surroundings, and when so much depends on the influence under which he lives. If a boy is to be a true and loyal Catholic, if he is to be a Catholic not merely in name but in principle and practice, he must surely spend those important years amidst Catholic surroundings, where he will see Catholic principles put into practice and where he will have the sunshine of Catholic devotion to warm his heart and fertilize the seed already planted there in his Catholic home. If we transplant a tree we take care to transplant with it a quantity of the earth into which its roots have up to this grown, and we are careful that its new surroundings shall be as much as possible like its old ones. But you cannot transplant Catholic practice and devotion, Catholic thought and feeling into a Public School, and the surroundings of a Catholic boy's life in a Public School will be, and must be, quite different from the Catholic surroundings of his Catholic home. Imagine a Catholic boy in those trying years, without his daily Mass, without public prayers, without the Blessed Sacrament; where Confession and Communion are difficult of access, where there is nothing whatever to remind him of his Catholic faith and practice, with no one at hand to encourage him, to help him, to lift him up when he falls, to sympathize with him in his difficulties, to be a support to him in his weakness, no one to whom he can open out his mind and heart, simply because there can be no one who can understand him or enter into his feelings—poor boy! to expect him to grow up into a good and fervent Catholic is to look for a miracle as great as the preservation of the three Hebrew children from the fire of Nabuchodonosor's furnace. And this in the case of a boy who has been well brought up and is well disposed: but what of those who have not been well brought up and are not well disposed? I need not answer the question.'

Father Norris's remarks on the absence of the idea of

the supernatural, with quotations from the 'Oxford Conferences,' [1] are equally to the point, and well worth careful perusal.

To anyone who has given himself time to consider the position of the Catholic Church from the true standpoint, namely that of her indissoluble union with Jesus Christ, it is obvious that no abdication of her position with regard to the children born to her in this the most august of all unions is possible. She is one with Him, and being 'subject to Christ' as her Divine Head she has no desire, no aspiration but that of bringing up her children to the knowledge and possession of the truth as it is in Him. How can she accomplish her mission unless she is given a free hand?

She claims the family, consequently, from the beginning. She surrenders to no rival the sacred duty of education. It is this ardent desire of hers, shown in all countries and in all times, which is ever bringing her in collision with the spirit of the world and with its authorities, earning for her the character which the words of our Lord taught His disciples to expect, that they should be hated of all men for His sake. To be surprised, therefore, at this necessary consequence of her divine mission, this conclusive proof (if proof were needed) that she comes from Him, is one with Him, is to ignore all that He has said concerning His Church.

It is, accordingly, in those illuminating words of our Divine Saviour in which He draws a parallel between these two unions, so greatly blessed by Him, that husbands and wives and parents will draw light and strength and benediction to accomplish His holy Will in their vocations in life; just as it is in these same words that they will read their severest condemnation, should they fail to comprehend the lesson contained therein.

[1] *Oxford Conferences*, by Rev. J. Rickaby, S.J.

ON VOCATIONS AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS

As the Canticle of Canticles, singing in glowing language of the mystic union between Christ and His Church, is a dead letter to those out of that Church (the modern commentator seeing in it nothing more than the love-songs of Solomon),[1] so the idea of a vocation, or call to give up earthly love for the sake of the heavenly, meets with small sympathy outside the true Fold, and is often a difficulty to those who have newly entered it.

To understand this idea fully, or as fully as it is permitted us to do in this life, we must exercise in a supreme degree the virtue of faith. For not here but hereafter shall we look upon His face, of Whom we learn that He was the most beautiful of the children of men. It is faith alone which will reveal to us the secret of that attraction which in all ages has spoken to the heart of man—now here, now there—drawing him by the cords of Adam; love strong as death, which no waters can quench. For all is hidden from us (the Canticle of Canticles repeats many times over) till the day breaks and the shadows flee away. 'Behold,' we are told, 'He standeth behind our wall looking through the windows, looking through the lattices. Behold my beloved speaketh to me. "Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful

[1] St. Jerome, writing to a penitent (see *Epist. ad Lætam*), recommends her not to read the Canticle of Canticles till by a course of Biblical study she is able to enter into its spiritual meaning.

one, and come. For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land." '

Jesus Christ, when He was made man and visited this fallen world in His Father's name, obedient in all things to His Will, found it in possession of three enemies of salvation: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. But He who said He had come to make all things new and to break the chain of Satan was not satisfied with proclaiming afresh the law promulgated on Mount Sinai, He disclosed to His disciples and followers another and an altogether superior one, a standard of perfection till then unknown. This standard or way of life is that known in the Church as the counsels of perfection: Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience.

Men live by their ideals.

> Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's heaven for?

'It is the idealists who draw the laggard multitude after them onward or upward, even as a man is slowly but surely drawn after his own ideal as long as he holds to it.' [1]

It is this ideal, therefore, that our Divine Saviour came to establish on earth by His teaching and example. In His life at Nazareth He gave to the world a model of the family life raised to the greatest height of sanctity and union of which it is capable. But in the three years of His public ministry—years of detachment from earthly ties, of poverty and of hardship; years in which, as He Himself said, He knew not where to lay His head—He taught a higher lesson still. For one moment during the course of His life at Nazareth, Jesus lifted the curtain and showed His parents and those who dwelt in Jerusalem what this future life was to be: for already the pressing desire in His heart urged Him to leave the shelter of His home, even at the

[1] *Hard Sayings*, by Rev. G. Tyrrell, S.J., p. 351.

cost of wounding the tender hearts of Mary and of Joseph, so that He might go about His Father's business. For these interests, this business, deserve an exclusive devotion, an undivided heart.

'Let the dead bury their dead, and come and follow Me,' was our Lord's answer to the disciple whom He had called, and who asked if he might first go and bury his father. And to the young man who had kept all the commandments from his youth: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and come follow Me.' That this commandment or counsel, as the Church prefers to call it, was not addressed to all mankind we know by the words of our Divine Saviour: 'All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who were born so from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made so by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take, let him take it' (Matt. xix. 11, 12).

From one point of view any call from God to work in His vineyard and to labour for His interests might be looked upon as a vocation; but among Catholics this word is commonly understood to signify that act of self-abnegation which Jesus Christ asked of His disciples; in other words, the vocation—to which both men and women may be called—to a religious state. From this position certain consequences naturally follow. One is that the call is *individual*; that is, it is an especial message or summons to the heart of each man and woman to whom it is addressed. Further, a vocation is ever a call to a higher life.

God speaks to all men in those words: 'If you love Me, keep My commandments;' but only to a chosen few does He whisper the words: 'Friend, come up higher;' 'for many are called, but few are chosen.' It is by a want of comprehension of these two facts, which underlie all vocations, that much dissension and misery is entailed on families otherwise

united. It is also the cause of many ruined vocations. How common it is to hear of fathers or mothers objecting to their children joining contemplative Orders because they have no personal sympathy with that life; one Order is too severe, another would entail sacrifices on their sons or daughters of which they do not approve! Some even are opposed to those belonging to them becoming Priests or Nuns, preferring to keep them in the world. A lively faith, besides teaching us to hesitate before opposing God's designs on a soul, would lead us rather to rejoice that those dear to us should have so signal a favour and proof of God's love bestowed on them. For could God give greater proof of His love for man than to call him to a life of closer union with Him? A life, it is true, of sacrifice of earthly joys, but not devoid of those unspeakable consolations which He reserves for all who give up home and friends to follow Him: a life which will be crowned for all eternity with the reward promised to those who emulate the life of Christ on earth and that of His Virgin Mother, that they 'follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.' For they are the 'first-fruits to God and to the Lamb.' What can be more inspiring than the words the Saints and Fathers of the Church use with regard to the Priesthood? A Kempis says: 'If thou hadst the purity of an angel, and the holiness of St. John the Baptist, thou wouldst not be worthy to receive or handle this Sacrament. . . . Lofty is the ministry, and great the dignity of priests, to whom that is given which has not been granted to angels.' Again we read:[1] 'St. John Chrysostom sums up the power of a priest in these two, namely the consecration of the Sacrament of the Altar and the absolution of sin, or, as we say in theological terms, in the jurisdiction over the natural and over the mystical Body of Christ. . . . This jurisdiction expresses the intimate closeness of the relation between the priest and the Son of God. It would seem that

[1] *The Eternal Priesthood*, pp. 12, 16.

after the participation of His Priesthood, the impression of His character, and the configuration of the priest to his Divine Master, there is no relation left to be conceived. And yet there are two still to be spoken of. First there is the continual daily fellowship of the disciple with his Master, and the servant with his Lord. He is servant, friend, and companion. As Peter, James, and John were of all the disciples nearest to our Saviour upon earth, so are His priests among the faithful now. All the day they are near to Him; all their life is related to Him. From Him they go out in the morning, and to Him they return at night. Next there is the relation of a true, substantial, and living contact in the Holy Mass, as real as when St. John lay on His bosom at supper, or as when He washed St. Peter's feet. When we hold the Blessed Sacrament in our hands we are in contact with God, with God Incarnate, with the Creator and Sanctifier. More real than the earth under our feet, which will pass away, is the presence of the Incarnate Word, which will never pass away. . . . If, as we hold the Blessed Sacrament in our hands, our eyes were opened like the eyes of Cleophas at Emmaus, we should know that beyond this sacramental and substantial contact there is nothing more intimate, except union with Him in the light of glory.'

There are some very striking passages in the Scriptures with regard to the dignity of the Priesthood, both in the Old Testament and in the New, showing how God has chosen to identify Himself with the ministers appointed by Him, and bearing His message to man. 'With all thy soul fear the Lord, and reverence His priests. With all thy strength love Him that made thee, and forsake not His ministers' (Ecclus. vii. 31–2). Even more pointed are the words of our Divine Saviour: 'He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me' (St. Luke x. 16). And St. Paul says: 'We beseech you, brethren, to know them who

labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you: that you esteem them more abundantly in charity for their work's sake. Have peace with them' (1 Thes. v. 12, 13). Comment on these words would seem superfluous, were it not so common an event to find Catholics, otherwise well instructed, ignorant or forgetful of them. Reverence for priests, grounded on the belief that they are ambassadors from God and our Fathers in Christ, and a recognition of their labours and of the charge they have over us, also a spirit of good-will and charity in our intercourse with them, are plainly indicated in the words of Holy Writ and mark the true Catholic. It is a fruit of piety which is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost to hold in esteem from supernatural motives those who are consecrated to the service of God. This same gift, for which we all have need to pray, will act as a check on that natural inclination to criticism and censoriousness so common in beginners in the spiritual life, taking the form, as it often does, of complaint of the supposed deficiencies of members of the priesthood—such, for instance, as a lack of birth or of social standing. To this there can be but one answer. Can the Church do wrong in following the example of our Blessed Lord Himself? For we know that, having the world to choose from, He drew His Apostles from the ranks of the poor, 'taking the weak things' (as St. Paul tells us) 'that He might confound the strong, that no flesh should glory in His sight' (1 Cor. i. 27, 29).

There is surely another reason which should make for charity in our criticisms on the clergy and our intercourse with them, if we are honestly desirous of forwarding the interests of Jesus; and that is that a home where sons and daughters are constantly hearing of the shortcomings of the priesthood is rarely fruitful of vocations. How great this loss is to the Church as well as to the family we can measure by the need, which was never greater than at the present

time, for highly educated and fervent priests, animated with a great love of God and zeal for His service.

A just and fitting reverence for the priesthood—whether secular or regular—is therefore a characteristic of a well-instructed Catholic; but, like other excellent principles and precepts, it is possible to overdo it. That it is overdone by some worthy souls whose zeal outruns their discretion cannot be denied. The words, 'have peace with them,' are not to be interpreted into meaning, do nothing without consulting them.

A priest, as long as he is subject to his Bishop and with a cure of souls under him, represents the teaching Church, the *Ecclesia docens*. But though the Church is infallible in its corporate capacity, a priest is not infallible in the everyday events of life. As a man he has his infirmities like any other. For, according to the words of the Apostle, he carries his treasure in earthen vessels. To put him unduly on a pedestal is therefore as bad for him as it, in itself, is injudicious. It is also to run counter to the good and wholesome tradition which excludes priests from hero-worship on personal grounds, while it encourages reverence for them and their office—a tradition which has for its foundation that solid common-sense whose dictates can seldom be set aside with impunity.

Converts have much to learn on entering the Catholic Church, and probably with regard to nothing more than her largeness of heart—in other words, her Catholicity. For if a 'liberal Catholic' is a phrase odious to the ear, signifying as it too often does one who minimizes her doctrine and is disloyal to her utterances, he who is liberal and wide in his views is truly carrying out the spirit of the Church, as it is the one which ever animates her conduct.[1] This is especially

[1] It will be said that charity between rival religious Orders is not by any means their chief characteristic. That all monks and nuns have not risen to the heights to which they are called by their holy vocation

true with regard to her treatment of the religious Orders, and all those kindred organisations which have grown up within her bosom. The spirit of criticism, of admiration of one rule or Order and condemnation of another—a spirit of *exclusiveness* where all are equally working for God's glory, though in different ways—is of all others the one most opposed to the practice and teaching of the Church. And yet is it not frequently seen not only among those outside the fold, but even at times in the ranks of those admitted into it? This narrow disposition—with non-Catholics—is constantly displayed in their opinions and judgments with regard to certain Orders, which by immemorial prejudice have come under their ban. Of St. Dominic, for instance (and even the Order of the Friar Preachers founded by him), they have no word too hard to use—though, as we know, he was a fellow-worker of St. Francis of Assisi and rivalled that great saint in his love of God and man. The Company of Jesus, again, has notoriously ever since its foundation offered a target to the attacks of the world. For the non-Catholic, no doubt, such attacks are only what was to be expected of them, as probably no religious Society has done more by its learning, its influence over youth, and its zeal for the propagation of the faith to defeat the ends of the Reformation; but when Catholics take up the hue and cry it is surely matter for regret.

To all such prejudiced and sectarian views the Church

cannot be denied. The human element is strong in the cloister as in the world. Also it is an acknowledged fact that men will push to extremes their violence in favour of rights and privileges as a corporate body which they would be incapable of in their own personal interests. To the scandals which such divisions offer in the Church we can oppose many beautiful (though far less known) traditions of charity and goodwill—such, for instance, as that between the Franciscans and Benedictines, dating from the time of St. Francis, who received the Portiuncula from the sons of St. Benedict, and continuing to this day—besides many others too numerous to mention.

opposes her large sympathies—her larger heart. As St. Paul, her spokesman, says: 'Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit' (1 Cor. xii. 4–7).

Could anything be more remarkable, exemplifying as it does the universality of the Church and her divinely appointed mission to all the nations of the earth, than the way in which in successive centuries—now in one country, now in another—sons and daughters have risen from her bosom called up by different needs, as these in turn manifested themselves, but all animated by the same spirit, teaching the same doctrines, and working for the same great ends, the glory of God and the salvation of souls?

If we trace the rise and growth of the great religious Orders from their beginning (and could there be a more deeply interesting study for the Catholic?), we see how marvellously each one has contributed to the great work of building up the City of God. This work has been coincident with the rise of the Christian religion from the primitive ages. For in the early days, whilst the Church was suffering from severe persecution, and its head-quarters were still in the Catacombs, St. Pachomius and St. Macarius were drawing up their rules for the guidance of the anchorites who came to learn of them the maxims of perfection. And this divinely appointed work has gone on without a moment's cessation down to the present day. One primary and fundamental characteristic they all have in common, whether the principal object of their rule is work among the poor or the rich, or missionary work in foreign lands, or in the slums of great cities, or whether their efforts are directed to the conversion of sinners, or to the expiation of sin, and that is, that it is based on a supernatural principle, and carried out by supernatural methods—namely by prayer and self-denial

and the practice of penance. It is also formed on the example of the life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ whilst upon earth.

The first point of resemblance is a Christ-like love of prayer. No great work has ever been done for God or for souls without prayer. It is true that in the active Orders less time is given to prayer than in the contemplative, but not only is prayer a marked feature in the rule of all, but the staple maxim of active Orders is that by a holy union with God and a pure intention they should render their lives a *prayer in action*; thus exemplifying the old monastic saying: *Laborare est orare.*

A second point of resemblance we see between the religious Orders and their Divine Master is a spirit of zeal for God's glory and for the salvation of souls—a spirit such as that our Lord spoke of when He said the zeal for His Father's House had eaten Him up. A third is a spirit of sympathy and mourning with the Heart of Jesus pierced by the sins of mankind, and a longing to make reparation for them. And again it is one of intercession for souls, and even of vicarious suffering if need be, such as that which made the great Apostle exclaim that he was willing to be 'anathema from Christ' in order to gain the souls of his brethren; and in this we see the very spirit of our good and merciful Lord Himself.

It is this longing desire on the part of man to stand between his fellow-man and the wrath of God, incurred by his sins, which lies at the very root of all the contemplative Orders, and that this desire is very pleasing to God and a work that He asks of His chosen children, we know from the words of Holy Writ. For we read: 'And I sought among them for a man that might set up a hedge, and stand in the gap before me in favour of the land, that I might not destroy it, and I found none' (Ezech. xxii. 30).

To understand and appreciate the great work of the con-

templative Orders, nothing more is required than a knowledge of Scripture and of the working of the Holy Spirit in His Church. But, alas, how few go to work in the right way to learn God's designs in His own creation! The result is the stock objection to religious Orders with which we are all familiar—of wasted lives, delusion, idleness, and so forth. To such imputations the Scriptures afford a plain answer. We read in Exodus that when the Israelites went out to meet the army of Amalec the victory did not depend on their valour or the force of their arms, but on the prayer of Moses, who, watching on the summit of a hill, poured forth his soul in prayer, with arms extended, and forced, as it were, the consent of God to the triumph of his country's cause. In the history of Abraham we read the same lesson—that God seems unable to deny His gifts and mercies to fervent, humble, and persevering prayer. St. James (v. 16–18) says 'the continual prayer of a just man availeth much. Elias was a man passible like unto us; and with prayer he prayed that it might not rain upon the earth, and it rained not for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.' In the majestic figure of the prophet of Mount Carmel the Catholic Church sees a type of monasticism, and she recognizes in his vocation, his life of austerity, prayer, and withdrawal from the world, which blessed by the Divine approval was confirmed by such astounding gifts and prodigies, the authorization of the contemplative life led by some few elect souls among her children.

Further, we have another example, if possible, of an even more striking nature, and that is in the life of the great Precursor, of whom our Saviour said he 'is Elias that is to come,' the very soul and spirit of Elias having descended upon him. Of this great saint we read that he 'had his garment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey' (Matt. iii. 4).

We also gather from the Gospels that his life was spent in the desert in prayer and contemplation in preparation for his great mission. Here at least was an opportunity for our Blessed Lord to speak, and for us to learn whether a life of renunciation of family ties and social duties, one given up to prayer and austerity, was pleasing to Him or not. Speaking to the multitude Jesus says: 'Amen I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist;' and again, 'from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away' (Matt. xi. 11, 12). The religious Orders, therefore—contemplative as well as active—have a distinct place and meaning in the Divine economy. To deny this would be to refuse to give credence to the plain sense of the inspired writings, as well as to disown the interpretation put upon them since the first ages of Christianity. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that this deep meaning applied only to the religious themselves, for the work done by them is much more far-reaching. It extends to all members of the mystical body of Christ who choose to avail themselves of the graces thus offered to them, even should they themselves be leading ordinary lives in the world. For as Moses with outstretched arms pleaded with God and obtained a blessing on the soldiers of Israel, who without those prayers would have failed to secure victory, so should we whose lives lie in the world, uniting our efforts and our aspirations with the contemplatives of Holy Church, seek to obtain, through their intercession, success which otherwise might be denied to us.

There are two ways by which we may associate ourselves in a special manner with the contemplative Orders. One is by a devout intention, and the other by joining one of the many third Orders or Confraternities approved of by the Holy See with this object.

Of the first method Dr. Scheeben, after explaining that

we need not offer our own actions only to God, says: 'He accepts the good works of others in our name if we unite ourselves with them, and offer up their holy actions with the desire to perform the same works for His glory, and, that being impossible, to glorify Him becomingly at least by offering these works. Thus you may offer up to God all the good works which have been performed from the beginning of the world, not only by the saints, the apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins, not only by the angels, but also by the Blessed Virgin Mary, and by Jesus Christ Himself. You may adore God with the adoration of His own Incarnate Son and of all the saints, praise Him with their praise, love Him with their love, render thanks to Him with their thanks, pray to Him with their petitions, and suffer for Him with their patience. You may rejoice that they have served God with such love and devotion, and offer up this faithful service in atonement for your neglect and indolence. In this manner you may participate in the fruit of all these numerous and perfect works.'[1]

The object of the Third Orders is to draw a still closer tie between our souls and the souls of our fellow-labourers in Christ, the members of the great religious Orders and their holy Founders, by encouraging us to join in some of their devotional exercises as well as to learn something of the spirit of self-abnegation and detachment from the world, whilst living in it, which animated them. Our holy Father Pope Leo XIII. has more than once recommended the Third Order of St. Francis to both sexes as a cure of many of the spiritual evils by which we are afflicted at the present time. With this object he sent an encyclical letter to all the Bishops, inviting them to urge their flocks to enrol themselves as Franciscan Tertiaries, for he says: 'Inasmuch as the spirit of St. Francis, so thoroughly and so pre-eminently

[1] *Glories of Divine Grace*, by Dr. Scheeben, p. 433.

Christian, is wondrously suited to all times and places, no one can doubt that the Franciscan institutions will be of the greatest benefit in this our age. Just as in the twelfth century, so nowadays, hath divine charity grown not a little cold, and great is the disarrangement of Christian duties, partly through ignorance, partly through negligence. The greater part of men pass their lives in a like frame of mind, and with like desires, seeking for the comforts of life, and eagerly pursuing pleasures. Revelling in luxury, they are extravagant of their own goods, and greedy after their neighbours'. They extol the name of the fraternity of mankind; yet they talk more fraternally than they act. They are borne on by self-love, and genuine charity towards their weaker and poorer brethren is day by day growing more rare.'

It seems only fitting that this little work, which began with an attempt to describe the foundation of the Church on the rock, Peter, should conclude with the words of his successor Pope Leo XIII. If it is in the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church that Christians of all denominations profess their faith, to the Catholic these words are meaningless unless they include belief in her Divinely appointed Head. And can we doubt—we who through the mercy of God have received the grace of faith, whether by inheritance or by the special gift of God—that in that Church only we shall find the 'joy and peace in believing' which is the consoling heritage of her children?

We read in the life of St. Teresa that when that great Saint was dying only one thought was in her heart, only one word on her lips: 'Thank God that I die a member of the Catholic Church.' All recollection of the divine favours she had received, the miracles she had wrought, the intimate communications she had enjoyed with her Divine Spouse

was sunk or merged in that one consoling thought which she shares with the humblest of Christ's 'little ones.'

'And the Spirit and the bride say: Come. And he that heareth let him say: Come. And he that thirsteth, let him come; and he that will, let him take the water of life freely. . . . Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.'

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

It may be objected that no notice has been taken in the text of the great religious revival inaugurated by Wesley and Whitefield in the 18th century, in England; nor of the kindred efforts of the Salvation Army and similar organisations at the present day. But it is impossible to ignore the fact that these sects have minimized the vital importance of the sacramental channels of grace instituted by Jesus Christ; that they have never fully accepted baptismal regeneration, and that they are opposed to those doctrines on which the foundations of Christianity—as set forth in the Gospel—rest, namely penance, and obedience to the Church founded by Him. In the presence of these facts it seems best to keep silence, remembering the words of St. Paul: 'Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. For I give you to understand, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it; but by the revelation of Jesus Christ' (Gal. i. 8, 12).

APPENDIX II

As the grounds on which the Church bases her doctrine on fasting and abstinence are constantly attacked by those outside the fold, a few words of explanation of them may be useful to converts. In the first place, the history of penance is an absolutely unbroken one from the time God Himself inflicted it on Adam and Eve in punishment of their sin down to the present day—with,

however, one notable exception. The exception is that of the disciples and followers of Jesus Christ; for we know the Jews made it a matter of reproach against Him, saying: 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Thy disciples do not fast?' 'And Jesus said to them: Can the children of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast. And nobody putteth a piece of raw cloth into an old garment. For it taketh away the fulness thereof from the garment, and there is made a greater rent. Neither do they put new wine into old bottles' (Matt. ix. 14–17). In these striking allegories our Lord gives us a complete explanation of His reasons for stopping His disciples' fasts. The asceticism of the Jews was utterly vitiated by the motives which actuated them (see Matt. vi. 2–5). Accordingly Christ's object, as He tells us, was to make an entire break with the past, so that His followers should start afresh on the lines He Himself had laid down for them. An argument sometimes advanced—though it scarcely deserves serious refutation—is that the words our Lord used to the multitude, 'Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but what cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man,' are to be adduced against the doctrine of fasting. If we take these words with the context, however, we see how impossible it is to put any such construction on them; for our Divine Saviour used them when defending His disciples against the accusations of the Jews, who said: 'Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the ancients? For they wash not their hands when they eat.' In His answer to these men Jesus gives a reason for His condemnation of these outward practices of piety. He says the Jews substituted their traditional observances for the commandments of God; that the words of Isaias were fulfilled in them: 'This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.' Further, He tells them in vain they worship Him, for they teach 'the doctrines and commandments of men.' In all this we see a distinct reference to the ceremonial washings of the Jews, and none to the practice of fasting, which was a Divine ordinance, and the rules of which have been since drawn up by that Church of whom He spoke when He said: 'He that heareth you heareth Me.' Finally, to make this distinction even clearer, our Lord returns again to it, and having enumerated the inward causes which defile a man—'evil thoughts, murders,

adulteries,' and so forth, He says: 'These are the things which defile a man. But to eat with unwashed hands doth not defile a man' (Matt. xv. 2, 20). But if we should seek for even more powerful arguments in favour of the doctrine of fasting from the Gospel, we should find them in the history of the man who brought his son to the disciples so that they might cast out the devil who had entered into him. We know that our Lord explained to His disciples the reason of their failure in the words: 'But this kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting' (Matt. xvii. 20). By this and innumerable other texts which might be quoted our Lord shows that in order to gain a conquest over evil spirits, and our own evil natures, ever prone to sin (the enemy from within as well as the enemy from without), we must arm ourselves with the weapons of prayer joined to fasting; so that, as St. Paul says, writing to the Romans, 'you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service' (Rom. xii. 1).

APPENDIX III

The words 'vain repetition,' used by our Lord when rebuking the Pharisees, have been constantly taken by non-Catholics as a condemnation of the Rosary, and similar prayers; an explanation, therefore, of the sense in which these words are understood by the Church may be useful. Probably the simplest interpretation of them is that the Catholic sees in the word 'vain' the grounds of Christ's rebuke, and the Protestant considers that it refers to the word 'repetition.' If our Divine Saviour intended to condemn all prayers or petitions which were repeated many times, it is no exaggeration to say that all the earnest prayers mentioned in the Scriptures, as well as all those offered up by all fervent suppliants, would come under this condemnation. When contrasting the prayer of the Pharisee with that of the Publican our Lord had only words of praise for the contrite sinner, who from the abundance of his heart—which had no room for any thought save those of humility and repentance—poured forth his suppliant cry: 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' This is only one of the many prayers, constantly repeated, which the Scripture holds out for our admiration and imitation. It needs but little practice in the habit of saying the Rosary to find how wisely our Holy Mother the Church

has provided for the wants of her children in recommending this devotion to them. It is suited to all ages and ranks in life. The little mechanical aid of the beads held in the fingers recalls the wandering thoughts; and as the lips repeat the august words in which the angel hailed the predestined Mother of the Son of God, and St. Elizabeth the blessed fruit of her womb, at the same time the mind dwells on the mysteries of holy faith, and the lessons taught by them sink into the soul.

APPENDIX IV

A Catholic practice which will strike converts on embracing the Faith (and which perhaps demands some explanation) is that of making money-offerings to have Masses said for different intentions. They will probably be told at the same time that spiritual favours cannot be bought or sold. How can these two contradictory statements be reconciled? St. Thomas explains as follows: '"To sell or to buy what is spiritual is simoniacal; but to receive or to give something for the support of those who minister spiritual things, in accordance with the statutes and approved customs of the Church, is lawful, yet in such wise that there is no idea of buying and selling and that no pressure is brought to bear on those who will not give by withholding spiritual things which ought to be administered, for this would look like sale. But after the spiritual things have been freely bestowed, then the statutory and customary offerings and other dues may be exacted from those who are unwilling but able to pay." (2^a 2^{ae}, Q. c. a. 3.) We may add that this doctrine is founded upon the teaching of our Lord (Luke x. 7) and of St. Paul (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14). Hence all theologians hold that such stipends are due *ex justitia*. Familiar instances are the offerings made at weddings, funerals, and baptisms, and when Mass is said for anyone's special intention.'[1] The forgiveness of sins—whether mortal or venial—is therefore never made (nor ever has been) the object of payment in the Catholic Church. The offering made to a priest with the object of his saying Mass for the donor corresponds o the offerings of bread and wine which it has been customary for the faithful to make to their pastors since the primitive age of the Church. This stipend or fee is fixed by the Bishop. It has been

[1] *Cath. Dict.* p. 841.

sometimes urged that rich people have an advantage herein over the poor, both in their own lifetime and in the greater number of Masses offered up for them after their death. 'Pope Benedict XIV. points out that the rich have no unfair advantage over the poor because of their greater power to have Masses said for them. All souls are God's, and He can give the poor a special share in the general prayers of the Church, and supply their wants in a thousand ways. Riches and poverty are each, if rightly used, the means of salvation.'[1]

[1] *Cath. Dict.* p. 613.

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